5 Malacañang wannabes seek new 'Garci' probe

By Cathy Yamsuan

CITING THE NEED FOR CLOSURE, FIVE presidential candidates yesterday said they would back the reopening of an investigation into the "Hello Garci" controversy if they were elected in May.

"It is essential for the government to determine why the system failed, what went wrong and why it is so difficult to correct the problem," said Sen. Benigno Aquino III of the Liberal Party.

"If there is no closure, we perpetuate the problem," Aquino said.

Sen. Ana Consuelo Madrigal also ar-

1 MALACAÑANG A4

BUSINESS / B1

El Niño dries up P1.4 billion worth of crops

ACROSS / A13

Cojuangco wants nuke plants in Pangasinan

ACROSS / A13

Truck, jeep collide in Cagayan; 13 killed

WORLD / A20

Pope to meet Irish bishops over child abuse scandal

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Tuesday, February 16, 2010 ** 8 sections / Vol. 25 / No. 70 P28

7 candidates slam DOH over free condoms

By Cathy Yamsuan

NO MORE FREE CONdoms—not on Valentine's Day or on any conceivable occasion.

The Department of Health (DOH) had better not do a repeat of last

7 CANDIDATES A8

Automation worries bets

Doubts raised on integrity of polls; 'electronic Garci' feared

By Jocelyn R. Uy and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE SPECTER OF AN "electronic Garci" was raised yesterday in a forum in which six of seven presidential candidates feared there would be glitches in the automated elections in May and some suggested going manual as an option.

Only Sen. Richard Gordon was confident the Commission on Elections (Comelec) would do its job.

"I cannot see a situation where it will fail because that will create anarchy in the country. I don't think the government can stand a failure of election. I don't see why we should go back to manual now because we have so much invested already," Gordon said.

But even the administration standard bearer, Gilbert Teodoro Jr., decried "big logistical difficulties" in the Comelec's implementation of the first nationwide computerized balloting.

"The integrity of the elections is vital ... automation is fine but the way it is implemented, I would have my doubts," Teodoro said.

The former defense secretary

AUTOMATION A4

THE AYES HAVE IT Presidential candidates—(from left) Sen. Benigno Aquino III, Sen. Richard Gordon, Sen. Jamby Madrigal, Nicanor Perlas, JC de los Reyes, Gilbert Teodoro, Eddie Villanueva—say yes to close elections on May 10 during Monday's forum with foreign correspondents in Manila.

Think issue: GMA seeks new mandate in May polls

By Fernando del Mundo
Chief, I-Team

(Second of a series)

WITH THE GHOST OF "HELLO Garci" hounding her, President Macapagal-Arroyo is seeking a new mandate in the May elections.

She is making an unprecedented run for the congressional seat in her Pampanga home district and is likely to win and become House Speaker after she leaves Malacañang in June.

Palace aides explain that at 62, this workaholic feels she still has a lot to do. She keeps a hectic schedule from dawn to late evening.

On a recent Tuesday, she sat down for a two-hour late dinner with Inquirer editors after attending a series of five events to promote her pet cybercorridor project for the business process outsourcing sector. It's a sunshine industry that last year generated revenues totaling $7.2 billion, up 19 percent from 2008.

But one top adviser says that in running for Congress, Ms Arroyo wants to "cover all grounds" to protect herself against critics threatening to prosecute her for corruption and to preserve a legacy to-

THINK ISSUE A6

Military presents 'Morong 43' in court

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE COURT OF APPEALS YESterday heard first hand from a 62-year-old doctor the ordeal he and 42 other health workers underwent after they were arrested by the military 16 days ago in the middle of a training seminar in Morong, Rizal.

Dr. Alex Montes, who described himself as a volunteer instructor for community health workers, narrated before the appellate court's special first division the "psychological torture" he underwent.

Montes said he was subjected to prolonged and repeated interrogations while he was blindfolded and

MILITARY A6

DEFIANCE Yolanda Bilocura, one of the 43 Morong detainees, raises her fist in protest as she disembarks from a bus at the Court of Appeals for the writ of habeas corpus hearing.

Comelec backtracks on celeb endorsers

By Leila B. Salaverria

KRIS AQUINO, WILLIE REVILLame and Sarah Geronimo may have hours-long ordeal after the Commission on Elections (Comelec) on Sunday said it would not require celebrity endorsers, broadcasters and columnists to resign or go on leave from their media outfits for the duration of the campaign for the May polls.

The Comelec is leaving it up to the media outfits if they want their stars, broadcasters or columnists who endorse candidates to take some time off during the election season, accord-

COMELEC A4

Skip meals, help feed the poor—Church

By Leila B. Salaverria

BY SKIPPING MEALS DURING Lent, you can help those who have been starving for most of their lives.

Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales is calling on the faithful to help the Catholic Church feed malnourished children and their families, saving money saved through fasting can later buy food for the poor.

Rosales made the appeal in a

SKIP A4

PEA JOB FAIR Some 3,000 jobs are available at the Inquirer Job Market Career Expo 2010 that ends today at the Trinoma Mall activity center in Quezon City. Viewing the booths on Monday is special guest, Vice President Noli de Castro, with Inquirer president/CEO Sandy Prieto-Romualdez.

Davao sect draws top politicos

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—IT WAS A NIGHT of public contrition, forgiveness, sweet talk, and, of course, politics.

The occasion was the 20th Feast of the Tabernacles of the religious group called Kingdom of Jesus Christ, The Name Above Every Name, and the main guests included deposed President Joseph Estrada, former Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro Jr., Sen. Richard Gordon—all presidential candidates—and vice presidential aspirant Prospero Nograles.

The gathering in the group's compound just beside the Davao International Airport on Sunday night—Valentine's Day—was led by its influential Pastor Apollo Quiboloy and re-

DAVAO A8

Who is Pastor Apollo Quiboloy?

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—PASTOR APOLLO Quiboloy claims he was in bed shortly before the 2004 presidential election when "all of a sudden I saw a vision." In the vi-

WHO IS A8

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

5 13 29 18 21 31

6SUPER LOTTO

8 7 0 6 8 4

4DIGIT

6 9 3 8 4 0 3

MEGALOTTO 6/45

10 17 24 32 38 41

P5,180,605.40

High court removes Bautista from Marina on technicality

By Dona Pazzibugan

THE SUPREME COURT HAS DECLARED UNCONstitutional the appointment of Transportation Undersecretary Elena Bautista as concurrent officer in charge of the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina).

In a Decision penned by Associate Justice Martin Villarama Jr., the high court en banc unanimously declared Bautista's appointment as acting Marina chief in violation of the constitutional ban against dual or multiple appointments.

Bautista's appointment was questioned by lawyer Dennis Pena, who argued that the position of Marina administrator was not an ex-officio post for an undersecretary of the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC).

In her comment, Bautista said the case was moot since she had relinquished her post as transportation undersecretary for maritime transport.

But the high court ruled otherwise in its decision, saying the case was not moot because Bautista continued to perform the duties of the Marina chief even after she relinquished her post as undersecretary.

Former Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board head Thompson Landicho now sits in DOTC bead for maritime transport.

"At the time the case was filed, yes, I was holding both positions [DOTC undersecretary and Marina administrator]. But that issue has already been addressed," Bautista said. "That's already moot and academic."

She said her appointment as Marina administrator took effect on Feb. 3, 2006.

But the high court cannot see to rule on the constitutionality of President Macapagal-Arroyo's appointment of Bautista as "acting" Marina chief.

"Apart from their bare assertion that Bautista did not receive any compensation when she was Marina OIC, respondents failed to demonstrate clearly that her designation as OIC was not an additional capacity as required by the primary functions of her office as DOTC undersecretary for maritime transport," the high tribunal said.

"It must be stressed that while the designation was in the nature of an acting and temporary capacity, the words 'additional' were employed. Such holding of office pertains to both appointments and designations because the appointee performs the duties and functions of the office," it added.

In a statement, Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile lauded Bautista's removal as Marina chief, saying that Bautista was liable for "the millions who died in the series of maritime disasters during [her] watch." With a report from Rudy O. Mendoza Jr.

Arellano is chief state prosecutor

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo has appointed Quezon City prosecutor Claro Arellano chief state prosecutor of the Department of Justice.

Arellano replaces Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño who retired last week.

Prior to his appointment, Arellano served as director of the Witness Protection Security and Benefit Program for Region IV-A (southern Tagalog).

He was appointed state prosecutor in 1986 and regional state prosecutor for Region IV in 1991.

He was appointed city prosecutor of Quezon City in 2008 and successfully prosecuted the first plunder case against former Bureau of Internal Revenue executive Dominga Mansilli. Jhesa Pinto Sagayo

Aquino dares Villar: Let's go 'mano a mano'

By Gil Cabacungan

LIBERAL PARTY STANDARDbearer Sen. Benigno Aquino III yesterday challenged his closest rival, Sen. Manuel Villar of the Nacionalista Party (NP), to a one-on-one (mano-a-mano) debate campaign to educate the public on the campaign issues.

In an interview with reporters after the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (Focap) debate, which Villar snubbed, Aquino said he was willing to give the NP standard-bearer the participants of choosing when subjects to tackle in their debates.

"I really want us to have a real debate, where we will be battling each other from the start," said Aquino, who added that he was not satisfied with rigorous debate formats in which all nine candidates for president participate. "For countrymen, who saved to be educated, probably lose their concentration or attention in long-winded debates."

"I am leaving it to him [Villar] to choose the topic, whatever he likes. I am comfortable here, we are supposed to have some degree of competence in oil as well," said Aquino.

He said he was willing to go one-on-one or even one-on-three, possibly to include other presidential candidates such as former President Joseph Estrada and former Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro.

The latest surveys show Aquino and Villar in a close race, Estrada and Teodoro are third and fourth, respectively.

"We want to go beyond the second bites," said Aquino.

Aquino admitted he was frustrated by the limited amount of time in public forums to expound on his platform of governance. He said he might decide on two more public debates with all the candidates on stage, after which he would attend only those issues with a limited number of participants to give each candidate more time to speak.

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BOOM TRUCK
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TOYOTA HIACE

No brownouts if Limay plant kicks in–Reyes

By Amy R. Remo

POWER CONSUMERS IN LUZON MAY BE spared from one-to-two hour rotating brownouts if the 600-megawatt (MW) Limay combined cycle power plant in Bataan begins operations before noon today.

According to Energy Secretary Angelo T. Reyes, the Limay power plant, the ownership of which was recently transferred to San Miguel Energy Corp., is expected to start generating at least 150 MW this morning.

"We have coordinated with the critical power plants. For Limay, we have contracted as less than the chairman, Ramon Ang, and we have told him how critical the situation is and (he said) they are doing everything so that that 180 MW will come on ASAP tomorrow," Reyes said in a briefing yesterday.

He explained that should the Limay facility remain offline up to 11 a.m. today, Luzon might experience rotating brownouts.

Last week, the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) reported that the Luzon grid was not meeting the required contingency reserve level of 1,200 MW. As of yesterday, grid power reserves was only 696 MW. The Visayas and Mindanao were also experiencing deficits of 115 MW and 116 MW, respectively.

Carlito Claudio, NGCP vice president for system operations, earlier said demand for electricity had begun to increase and was expected to rise as summer arrives. The electricity supply "continues to be low and may not be enough to meet the demand of all power grid users," he said.

The main power reserves were due to the maintenance and repairs being done on the power plants; unscheduled outages of some facilities; base load generators; and the 63 little weather disturbance, which is causing a strain on the country's hydroelectric plants.

Reyes had earlier explained that the Malampaya gas to power project, which supplies 2,700 MW of natural gas to three power plants in Luzon, also down for repairs on Feb. 18.

Aside from Malampaya, another five large power plants in Luzon are shutting down for repair and maintenance checks, among them the 1,200-MW Ilijan natural gas-fired power plant in Batangas; 650-MW coal-fired facility of Quezon Power Philippines Ltd. Co.; 1,000-MW Sta. Rita natural gas-fired facility; 600-MW Calaca coal-fired plant; and the 700-MW Sual coal-fired facility.

The energy chief said the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority would run its 300-MW power plant and connect it to the Luzon grid by April 30.

Meanwhile, Pampanga Rep. Jose Miguel Arroyo sought a special probe into Energy Secretary Reyes's decision to conduct a hearing on the power supply situation while Congress is in recess.

Arroyo, chair of the House energy committee, said he wanted to diagnose allegations made by opposition candidates Jinggoy Estrada and Loren Legarda, and his mother, President Macapagal-Arroyo, might manipulate the results of the May 10 elections through massive brownouts.

Oil firms slash prices

OIL COMPANIES have slashed prices of gasoline by P1 a liter, diesel by 25 centavos a liter, and of kerosene by 35 centavos to 50 centavos a liter, effective today.

Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., Chevron Philippines, Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc. and Unioil Petroleum Corp. made the rollback adjustments following a rollback by Total Philippines yesterday.

Total, however, maintained its rollback for kerosene (50 centavos a liter) and diesel (25 centavos) only today (Tuesday).

Independent player Flying V Philippines said it would match prices of petroleum products per trading area.

The latest cut in local fuel prices reflected the downward trend in international market prices.

Energy Secretary Angelo T. Reyes said the decline was due to the lower-than-expected demand for petroleum products by the US and China. As such, prices have been declining over the past two weeks, he said.

Data from the Department of Energy showed the price of regular benchmark Dubai crude fell to $72 a barrel as of Feb. 25, from $77 a barrel in January.

The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark dipped to $80 a barrel in the first 15 days of the month, from the previous month's average of $88 a barrel.

Similarly, MOPS-based diesel prices dropped to $91 a barrel in the Feb.1-15 period, compared to $93 a barrel in January.

Amy R. Remo

Comelec allays fears on automated polls

By Leila B. Salaverria

IT'S ALL ABOUT FEAR OF THE unknown.

The Commission on Elections (Comelec) said yesterday the poll body would just have to keep the presidential candidates informed about its preparations for the automated balloting in May.

Election Commissioner Gregorio Larrazabal said the concerns raised by the candidates at a forum were prompted by a "scare tactic" being used against the use of counting robots.

"I guess the best way is just to inform them of what's happening, the updates, keep people abreast of the developments so people will be aware. I guess the fear of not knowing is what's prevalent now. It's a fear of not knowing what will happen. And we're doing our best to address it," he told reporters.

Larrazabal said that this was why the Comelec had been conducting public tests of the counting machines and letting people participate in the preparations as much as possible.

Other agencies are involved in the process, he said.

For instance, telecommunications firms are supposed to provide the machines adequate service used to transmit the results of the voting.

The Department of Education has to have well-trained teachers to man the voting, while the power sector has to ensure adequate power supply.

"They have to do their part," Larrazabal said. "Everybody who has a stake and a role in the success of elections must do their part. It can't be a Comelec-only activity," Larrazabal said.

Also yesterday, the Comelec said that the printing of about 1.3 million ballots for the elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) had been completed, paving the way for the printing of the ballots for the rest of the country.

The ballots for the ARMM are different from the ones to be used elsewhere, since they contain Arabic translations and are also twice as long as those used in other provinces. The ARMM ballot is 27 inches long.

Automation worries presidential candidates

From page A1

until the last batch of computerized counting machines would be delivered only on the last week of February, and teachers would only have one training session in March.

"There is really a need to engage the Comelec in disclosing whether or not it can be implemented on a credible level for the upcoming elections," Teodoro said.

Other presidential candidates present in the debate were Senators Benigno Aquino III and Jejomar Binay, Gilberto Teodoro and Comelec IC do los Reyes.

Sen. Manuel Villar, standard bearer of the Nacionalista Party, and former President Joseph Estrada were invited but failed to attend due to other engagements.

Poll watchers, however, said the automated elections would not be a panacea for the country's problems.

"There is a strong possibility of an electronic fiasco," Pedro said, referring to widespread computer malfunctions purportedly but unconfirmed by the May 2007 senatorial and Ehrenza Commission, or Virginia Guardianes. The appointees said the tapes indicated Mr. Arroyo stole the 2004 presidential vote, a charge she has denied.

Probability of failure

"There are so many things that need to work simultaneously in so many levels design, such as source code, and others. Imagine that the probability of failure is very, very small. What will happen is that there may be no election but there will be failure of election. The probability is increasing every day," Pedro said.

Michigan likewise said the Comelec must take up backup mechanisms in case the machines fail, such as allowing voting after Feeding out their high school student could hand the voting machines

Filing deadline for WWII vets

TODAY IS THE LAST day for filing by 99-plus World War II veterans of their applications for a one-time lump sum payment under the Dominican Burowen and Reinvestment act of 2009, according to Jon Skelly director of the US Department of Veterans Affairs.

In a video message posted on the US embassy website, Skelly encouraged relatives of ailing veterans to help them more the deadline for the filing of claims.

"We have received a lot of questions recently about veterans trying to collect documentation to be attached to the application. That is not necessary. Simply fill out the one-page application and my office will take care of the rest and ensure you if we need more information," Skelly said in the video.

He stressed that the law did not provide benefits for widows and children, or any other heirs of veterans.

However, certain widows of veterans who filed their applications but died while the applications were being processed were qualified to receive payments.

"We all know these veterans are heroes and they've loving us. This is why it is important that we make sure each and everyone of them would have an opportunity to claim this benefit and obtain the recognition that they deserve," Skelly said.

The law signed by US President Barack Obama on Feb. 17, 2009, authorized the release of a one-time payment to eligible Filipino veterans to be made through the US Department of Veterans Affairs from a $198-million appropriation established for this purpose.

Applying for this benefit will not affect other existing veterans benefits. Each application is submitted to the Manila VA (Veterans Affairs) Regional Office at the US embassy using VA Form 21-0138 which would be examined for eligibility based on the certain established in the law. Queries O. Salome

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AFP: 'Morong 43' medical officers of the NPA

By Marlon Ramos

THE CHIEF OF THE MILITARY unit holding the "Morong 43" yesterday said the detainees were indeed "health workers" but were medical officers of the communist New People's Army (NPA).

Maj. Gen. Jorge Segovia, commander of the Army's 2nd Infantry Division, said the detainees belonged to a "super body" of "NPA medics" from various provinces.

In a news briefing at Camp Aguinaldo, Segovia said rebel prisoners had assisted in the rule of the 43 health workers in previous NPA operations.

He said the detainees were scrapping key positions in the provincial, regional and national organs of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

"The arrested persons were actually members of the health bureau of the CPP-NPA. They were NPA medics," Segovia told reporters.

"They belonged to a 'super body' within the communist organization. This is a big organization," he said, adding that the group was the "NPA version of the Department of Health."

In fact, Segovia said several NPA leaders from the Visayas and Mindanao were supposed to attend the training held at the farmhouse owned by Dr. Melecia Ishmael, a consultant at the Philippine General Hospital, in Morong, Bataan.

Segovia said health training was essential in the decades-old Maoist revolution being waged by the NPA because medics wounded in skirmishes with state forces were not usually brought to hospitals, but to "clandestine clinics."

"Knowledge on health services was a basic component of their training. The medics were arrested were also being trained in making improvised bombs," Segovia said.

He said health training was typically conducted in rebel strongholds and guerrilla zones.

"They first were secure in guerrilla bases. But their practice training areas do not even violate anymore because of security concerns," he said, pointing out that intensified government operations had decimated NPA-controlled villages.

Segovia chided groups and personalities criticizing the raid, saying policemen and soldiers should instead be commended for the government's biggest victory against the NPA in recent years.

Amid negative public perception that generated by the arrest, he said personnel of the 2nd IB remained undaunted in their task to end insurgency in the Cordillerian region.

"I have expressed our sentiments to [Commission on Human Rights Chair Leila] de Lima. I told her that the perception of innocence that supplies to the [detainees] should also apply to my soldiers," he lamented.

"We know we are right; we know we did not commit those allegations. As what others say, we made a great service to the nation."

The Army commander denied allegations that Jane Balbuena, spokesdaughter of the late labor leader Crispin Beltran, was unjustly shunned by her husband after while other detained health workers were tortured.

Segovia said a female soldier was assigned to guard Balbuena and 25 other women detainees. Before last "deployment" to Samar, Balbuena was a regular NPA member in Central Luzon.

"Her late husband was an NPA who died in an encounter. Her current husband is also a communist rebel," he claimed.

Segovia said the tainted assault that the health workers suffered after they were rounded up was just natural.

"There was no deliberate intention on our part to inflict physical and psychological hurts on them," he said.

Military presents 'Morong 43' in Court of Appeals

From page A1

is handcuffs, was denied his right to see a lawyer and was held in military confinement.

The Army's 2nd Infantry Division based in Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal, yesterday finally complied with the Supreme Court's order to produce the 43 health workers, including Merlita and Dr. Melecia Ishmael, who were rounded up in a raid in a private resort house owned by Dr. Melecia Velmonte of Philippine General Hospital.

Merlita and his interrogators repeatedly asked Dalia if she knew a Timo Bryant, a commander of the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, and if he was involved in antigovernment activities.

"I'm being held in military confinement," he told the court.

"Every now and then in the past few days, I was brought out for 15 minutes for sunning. Windows are limited and it's very hard to get information from outside," Merlita added.

After hearing his companions during his testimony, the government panel was unable to answer the last question posed by his lawyer, Romeo Capulong, who wanted to know how his ordeal had affected him.

He blinked several times, rubbed his eyes and looked up.

"I'm very tired," he said, unable to speak further.

The special five division, chaired by Associate Justice Portia Aliño-Hormachuelos with Associate Justices Normandy Pizarro and Francisco Acosta as members, will continue hearing on the details of the arrest and how the military treated him and the other health workers.

After giving Col. Aurelio Baladad, the representative of the military at the habeas corpus hearing, a dressing down at the previous hearing, Pizarro yesterday commended the military's claim that it was able to produce all the 43 detainees.

He ordered the health workers to remain up so that the clerk of court could count them.

The government panel, led by Associate Solicitor General Rosmari Ramos, repeatedly protested Manuel testifying during the hearing, saying he was only summoned to be an "inquiry" into whether there was legal basis for the detentions.

Detective

But the 15 defense lawyers led by Capulong argued that the opposition court should look at all "the aspects and phases of detention," including the "disinterior" minutes of the arrest warrant.

Capulong said the defense lawyers were not able to talk to their clients until Thursday to get their statements.

Hermosisimo said the court allowed Montes' testimony because the hearing would not necessarily affect the merits of the criminal case at the Regional Trial Court in Morong where the health workers were charged with illegal possession of firearms and explosives.

"The primary focus of this hearing is to determine the legality of their detention," the justice said.

The detainees' lawyers also asked the appellate court to order their clients' transfer to the Philippine National Police headquarters at Camp Crame in Quezon City.

But the government lawyers opposed the motion, saying the army, not the police, has custody of the detainees.

Both sides were given until Wednesday to submit their memoranda.

Chaos outside the CA gates

By Jaymerick I. Andrade

CHAOS ERUPTED OUTSIDE the gates of the Court of Appeals as the 43 health workers were handed over to Army brass and driven back to a military detention facility in Tanay, Rizal.

Supporters and relatives of the health workers rushed to reunite the gates of the appellate court to greet the visiting buses, in an apparent attempt to shout their pain.

Members of the Manila Police District Civil Disturbance Management (MPD-CDM), armed with shields and truncheons, pushed back the crowd to clear a path for the buses, causing shoving and shouting matches between them.

The tension subsided when the buses drove away, trailed by a truck of soldiers, as the spirit-filled chanted "Bantay Detainee!" in reference to the soldiers.

Members of the militant groups Anakpawis, Bahaman, Gabriela, Bayan Muna, and Confederation of Filipino People's Republics (PCPR) were momentarily dispersed by members of the MPD-CDM.

Hours before the hearing at the CoA, MPD-CDM were seemingly noted to reinforce its groups' preparedness to the health workers and smother group of being communists.

The two groups were separated by 500 meters to avoid conflict.

The "environmentalist" group, People's Advocacy for Collaboration and Empowerment (PEACE), halted out at the alleged left-leaning party-list organizations for reportedly using the "Morong 43" to destroy the government's image.

In a statement, PEACE president Agnes Lopez Bunao, who noted the hospitals that she was a former communist rebel, said, "Their [Morong 43] plight is pitched because they are constantly being used to destroy the image of the government in the public's eyes."

Handcuffed to a soldier

The 43 health workers, 26 of whom were women, were inside the Court of Appeals' multistorey main building due to a military escort. The men were handcuffed to a male soldier while the women were handcuffed to a female soldier.

Before the hearing started, relatives were allowed to approach the detainees. One small girl slipped with her mother, who hugged her daughter with her left arm since her right wrist was handcuffed to her escort.

The tension had while Saint Interbalo stormed their arms on the handcuffs, saying the rest, one was spotted losing a handkerchief under his handcuffs.

The handcuffs were removed shortly before the start of the hearing apparently after the defense lawyers complained that this violated the detainees' rights.

But when the women would go to the bathroom, they were escorted.

Jane Balbuena, whose husband was murdered, denied that is separate reporters.

A certain Lt. Col. Zaragosa who said he was officer in charge of the detainees' escort, to mark Balbuena available to be interviewed by the media.

Balbuena's wrist was initially cuffed to an escort. Balbuena tried to shield her face from the reporters' phone cameras, and was clearly uncomfortable.

No moderation

But Balbuena denied the Inquirer report that quoted her mother, Cleda Beltran-Balbuena, as saying that her daughter was molested. "Those arrested have different accounts. We can ask the others. But I was discouraged," she said.

Asked if she was sexually harassed, she denied this. "Generally, the treatment was OK. There were a few times that I was threatened," she said.

Balbuena's mother told the Inquirer that her daughter who passed to her during her visit to the camp on Saturday that she and other detainees were blindfolded when brought to the toilet. "There, soldiers smashed their private parts," Cleda said, quoting her daughter.

Zaragosa and Balbuena's mother was either lying or was misquoted.

Mother's understanding

Cleda last night quoted Jane as telling her, "We are in Mexico." She said she understood why her daughter had insisted her statement.

Cleda said she believed everything Jane had told her earlier. Jane "never lied to me," she added.

But, Pia Gyotisian, who has filed a resolution calling for a Senate inquiry into the arrest, told reporters that some of the women detainees she spoke with have Thursday had complained of sexual harassment.

"For when a woman is in handcuffs and blindfolded that someone else has to remove your clothing isn't that a violation of privacy and dignity?" she said.

Gyotisian's perception to despite the absence of hard designs, there may be a cranking of the law," Guerrero added.

Montes said he did not even own a gun. "So maybe last time I held a firearm was during BSTC, and it's the one I was issued," he said.

He said he was a volunteer instructor for the Council on Health and Development, training the community volunteers on basic life support. He said he was also tutoring the participants for the board exam.

At around 6 a.m. on Feb. 6 he said he just had coffee, which turned out to be his last meal for the next two days, when the soldiers arrived and ordered the seminar participants to get down.

Montes said they were made to kneel in handcuffs on the hard and were blindfolded for the next two days until they were presented to a state prosecutor.

"It was very humiliating. Even when posing they would tell me not to take your shorts off," he said.

He said they were not told why they were arrested or where they were taken.

Montes said he was interrogated daily, with the soldiers asking many asking him the same things about his background and family history. All the while he was in blindfold and handcuffed. With reports from Amy Espiritu and Inquirer

Think issue: GMA seeks new mandate in May polls

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stained by vote-rigging allegations.

In a sense, the administration party has two presidential candidates—Ms Arroyo and her former defense secretary, Gilbert Teodoro Jr., 45, a lawyer trained for semiocher and Ateneo graduate in the service chain.

Due recurring question in the current presidential debates is whether Ms Arroyo should be prosecuted after she steps down—an action that Teodoro says he will leave to judicial system.

The only other presidential candidates who has lodged the issue is Sen. Manny Villar, the Nacionalista Party standard-bearer who is in a one-sided dead heat at the top in popularity surveys with Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III.

There is widespread speculation that while Teodoro is officially Mahardlung's candidate, First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo has secretly forged a deal to support Villar in exchange for the House speakership for his wife—a move that Palace spokespersons dismiss.

Although he remains at the bottom of popularity surveys, Teodoro is doing all the right things to distance administration-backed candidate Gil Cinco who kept distance from Bill Clinton despite his solid economic record and lost to George W. Bush in 2000.

One evidence is a series of TV ads showing Teodoro piloting a plane, suggesting he is about to take the country to greater heights, building on the Arroyo legacy.

'Kiss of death'

Teodoro dismisses claims that an Arroyo endorsement is a "kiss of death"—a perception that gained credence after the official proclamation as the ruling coalition's candidate in November last year. He refrained from running his hand, a virtual controversy on that occasion.

In March Monday, ruling coalition are expecting with governors—Teodoro's campaign sorties—the pair visited Davao, their head's pedestrian passes and rallies with Bank you manager in the President for the projects.

Among the candidates, only Teodoro is capable of amending the 1987 Constitution.

He says that the Constitution, designed primarily to prevent the rise of another dictator, can stand improvement, particularly its economic provisions that have crippled the country's global competitiveness.

Many in the opposition suspect that in moving for Congress, Mr Arroyo's main agenda is to revise the Charter, adopt the parliamentary system and become prime minister.

As early as 2003, Mr Arroyo announced her intention to amend the Constitution.

In a guest segment in 2005 after emerged conversations purportedly between Mrs Arroyo and Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano were leaked. The opposition said that the tapes were evidence the President stole votes in elections. She denies the charge.

As the controversy convulsed the nation and pushed calls for her to step aside, the President in August directed the Justice of a 11 member consultative committee to hold dialogues across the country and write a new constitution.

A draft Charter adopting the parliamentary system with transitory provisions giving Ms Arroyo extraordinary powers similar to those exercised by dictator Ferdinand Marcos was submitted for approval of Congress.

The Senate knocked the initiative down, prompting Ms Arroyo's supporters to mount a "people's initiative" to have the document submitted to a plebiscite. The Supreme Court rejected the effort as "grave abuse."

Until the dying days of the 13th Congress, moves were made to amend the Constitution, but they all perished in the doorstep of the House, where members were all potential presidential timber. Critics say the administration's control interest in the status quo.

"We need a resolution to change the Constitution," says one Palace aide.

The 1935 Constitution was revised under Ferdinand Marcos's martial law rule. He came up with a Charter modeled after the French parliamentary system with a strong president. It was approved in rump "citizen's assemblies."

The 1987 Constitution that supplanted Marcos's work was a product of President Corazon Aquino's revolutionary government that was created before the ratification of the Marcos dictatorship.

President Fidel Ramos likewise attempted to change the Charter, but backed off in the face of strong opposition from civil society groups and the Catholic Church.

Jose V. Abueva, who headed the 2005 consultative commission, says the Mar vote could be a chance to elect leaders who can deal with the nation's increasingly complex problems.

"After more than a century of nation-building since 1896 and just over 60 years of democratization since we regained our independence in 1946, the Philippines is still a weak nation," a "failing State," and "an unconsolidated democracy," he says.

Dysfunctional system

"After the folks revolt in 1986 and under the 1987 Constitution, we formally revived the democracy that Marcos had destroyed and destroyed by his authoritarian rule," says Abueva, a former president of the University of the Philippines.

"But we restored practice fed government with its congressional checks and balances and our highly centralized unitary system by removing the dysfunctional relations to the constitutional vision of building "a just and humane" society and realizing the substance of democracy."

Political and social scientists say that the blueprint documents that the Philippines adopted has failed to address the yearnings of Filipinos, so unlike China's.

Chile likewise fell under a right-wing dictatorship, which lasted 17 years, but it was able to transition made the Catholic country the most prosperous in Latin America. Last December, Chile joined the elite 30-nation Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the first country from the region.

While elections are all about hope, the current exercise has failed to inspire the young, or prompt the selectable the way the assassination of foreign Senator Ni did in 1983. That is why—for the first time in Philippine history—the campaign season has been dubbed "the dullest ever."

"There's a part of me that doesn't believe in elections anymore," Jose Dante Dayrit, 28, a financial assistant. While she says she knows she can make a difference, many voters in her village constitute the uneducated poor who will likely sell their votes. "People don't think issues, especially those in the national media."

Guns, goons and gold

The perceived changes that Filipino academics like Abueva talk about mostly address Filipinos' frustrations at elections brought about by a century of "guns, goons and gold" that is a product of a dysfunctional political system.

The key system that allows the proliferation of political parties without vision, transparency or accountability. It prevents the winnowing and rising of youthful promising leaders to the level of John F. Kennedy, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama.

Corruption of elections has led to such controversies as the "Hello Garci" scandal and all of those shenanigans that have engulfed the Arroyo administration. Abueva says corruption robbed the Filipino soul, the intellectual-turned-politician added with China.

"The problem with China is that you can throw any road at her and it will stick," says a presidential aide.

"What's the link with Chile? Her accomplishment mainly as good. It's all about mandate. That's a big issue in our discussions with macro," the aide adds.

"After Garci, I went through all the strategies. We had a decision," said John F. Kennedy, "We don't have a mandate, let's create it. I realize now, you cannot create mandate. You cannot create it. You cannot command it. It's really all about democratic election."

THE PUBLIC DESERVES TO KNOW

What the Shell Tax issue is all about

Recently, the public has heard of the issue regarding alleged non payment by Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corporation (PSPC) of excise taxes for imports of Catalytic Cracked Gasoline (CCG) and light catalytic cracked gasoline (LCCG), amounting to Php 7.35 billion for the years 2004-09. To correct the misleading, inaccurate and wrong statements that have been made regarding this case, PSPC would like to provide the public the facts of the case:

1. "Other Petroleum Firms are paying their excise tax, but not Shell" - This is not true. Shell, like all other petroleum firms, pays excise taxes on all its finished products to the government. From 2004-2009, Shell has paid over P37 billion in excise taxes for its finished products. On the other hand, finished product importers like Chevron, Total, and other independent players pay excise taxes to the Bureau of Customs (BOC) upon importation, but do not pay Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) excise tax on the same finished products before they are sold to the public. The difference then is when and to whom the tax payment is made to, and not the amount. Shell does not pay excise tax to the BOC on CCG/LCCG because like crude oil, these are intermediate or raw materials. However, Shell pays to the BIR excise taxes on all finished products that are produced from the raw materials, before the finished products are sold. There is, therefore no revenue losses to the government. Finished product importers pay excise tax to BOC, while refiners pay excise tax to BIR.

2. "The position of BOC is that LCCG and CCG is a finished product and that's why (Shell) should resolve and not muddle the issue" - As tested and certified by the Department of Energy (DOE), the agency with the technical expertise to determine whether a product is a raw material or a finished product, as early as 2003, LCCG/CCG is an intermediate or raw gasoline component that is blended to produce PSPC's gasolines to comply with the Clean Air Act (CAA). The Product National Standards (PNS) specifications will also show that LCCG/CCG do not meet the product specifications requirements, and therefore, cannot be sold as finished products. Even the BOC's Verification Committee admitted that Shell has not sold LCCG/CCG to the public but instead uses it as blending component.

3. "There is fraud on the part of Shell since when they imported the product, they listed them at BOC as gasoline, but when Shell goes to BIR it is declaring the imports as raw material" - This is not true. There is no fraud as we have always stated that CCG/LCCG is a kind of gasoline, but which cannot be used in its current specification and has to be blended with other components to meet the Clean Air Act and PNS standards for gasoline. It is therefore an intermediate or raw material.

4. "Shell is blackmailing the government by threatening to stop importing, shut down their refinery and claiming there will be shortages if BOC seize their importations" - Shell is not blackmailing the government. We are simply stating the fact that if BOC seizes our importations, we will have no raw materials to run the refinery and no products to sell. As Shell supplies 30% of the market, it will not be easy for the other oil companies to step into the void. We do not want this to happen but for purposes of transparency, we have to let the public and government know the consequences of the BOC's arbitrary action. In fact, even before the 20-day TRO issued by the CTA expired, Batangas Customs Collector Juan Tan attempted to unlawfully use Section 1508 of the Tariff Code to seize PSPC's goods, despite the fact that the shipments of crude oil, CCG and gas oil were already in the possession of PSPC and all taxes have been paid to Customs. Section 1508 does not authorize Customs to seize property or assets of PSPC, but only incoming importations, yet BOC Collector Tan attempted to unlawfully confiscate PSPC's property forcing PSPC to obtain judicial relief from the Regional Trial Court of Batangas.

5. "Shell is getting special treatment by getting tax exemption as a result of the BIR ruling in 2003" - This is not true. As discussed in item 1 above, Shell has been paying all the excise taxes on its finished products. In fact, as a result of BIR Commissioner Joel Tan-Torres' reversal, Shell is now the only oil company paying excise taxes twice starting January 2010! The House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means, the lead congressional committee for tax legislation, has issued an official report last January 27, 2010, that found that the Tan-Torres reversal is an imposition of an impermissible act of double taxation on Shell's imports of Catalytic Cracked Gasoline (CCG) and Light Catalytic Cracked Gasoline (LCCG) since it "in effect levies an excise tax twice on CCG and LCCG, first as raw materials upon withdrawal from the port of entry and second as components of a finished product upon withdrawal from PSPC's refinery." The Committee held that the imposition of the said double taxation is "a naked, arbitrary, and whimsical abuse of administrative power by the Commissioner of Internal Revenue and a usurpation of the power to tax solely vested in Congress by the Constitution."

We express grave concern on the actions by the BOC and the BIR for the following reasons:

1. The Tan-Torres reversal results in double taxation (the imposition of excise tax on the both the imported raw materials used and in the finished products), which not only puts PSPC in an uneven playing field compared to other oil players, but more importantly:
   - A. reflects instability in government policies (with dangerous precedent set due to retroactive application); and
   - B. results in a policy implication of discouraging manufacturing investments in the country, destroying the higher value added that the industry contributes.
2. The issue similarly reflects abuse of seizure power against importers on contested tax assessments. Furthermore, BOC insists that even if the case is still being heard in court, that Shell provides CASH payment in protest and does not want to accept bonds as security!

Shell's Business Principles have for many years been fundamental to how we conduct our business and we have always believed that living by them is crucial to our continued success. We believe that our reputation, which we have built and protected for so many decades, will be upheld if we act in accordance with the law and these business principles.

As above, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corporation maintains that we have paid all taxes on CCG, and that there are no factual and legal bases for saying otherwise. Shell has consistently been in the Top 10 Taxpayers list of the government and over the last 5 years, our annual tax payments has averaged about P 26 billion per year.

Shell will continue to exhaust all available legal remedies for the immediate resolution of this important issue. This issue is important for us, and as part of our business principles, it is also our duty to provide the public with accurate and truthful information, in the spirit of fairness and transparency.

The public deserves to know.

Davao sect draws top politicos

From page A1

tended by about 30,000 members of his flock.

Followers estimate the membership of the flock to run into millions.

Many vice presidential candidates of Benigno Aquino, organizers of the event where he publicly apologized to Estrada whom he said he had offended when he was still head of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

'Be my Valentine'

"I know that I offended (him) nine 10 years ago. I am asking for forgiveness at this time when two governs so all," Sonny said in a speech. "My public apology to Erap for offending him when I was asked to do what I had to do to carry out my duties."

Sonny was referring to his senior par ticipation in the ousting of Estrada in 2001. He had testified about an alleged attempt by Estrada to bribe him with huge positions in the government if he stopped dozens from the SEC.

Sonny had also alleged that Estrada received a kickback from business tycoons Alfonso Yuchengco's shares in the Philippine Long Distance Telecommunications Co. (PLDT) in 1998.

On Sunday, Sonny admitted to having been "used" by Estrada, but insisted he he "used so that they can grab the presidency from you."

"Please forgive me ... I ask you to become my valentine tonight," he said.

Estrada said he was surprised that Sonny was apologizing publicly over his role in kicking him out of Malacañang. He said Sonny's apology was reminiscent of former President Corazon Aquino's own apology before she passed away.

Erap forgives

"But if God can forgive, why couldn't I?" Estrada said in a blend of English and Filipino.

But the former President was cautious at the same welcome that Teodoro, the administration party's candidate, received from the flock of Quiboloy, called Kingdom citizens.

"I noticed that the applause for (the) was louder than what I got," Estrada quipped. "I am tempted to be envious but (the) is my friend. It's OK whatever is (Sonny) between us."

Before Estrada was called to speak, Teodoro, who came with his wife Tarlac Rep. Nikki Prudencio, was well applauded by the thick crowd which basked like a sea of white dresses. When he was called, some even showed his name.

It was Teodoro's second meeting with Quiboloy in less than a week. On Thursday, Teodoro was seated by Quiboloy around the group's sprawling Prayer Mountain compound in Barangay Tamugan, where he was also prayed over by the Pastor.

Quiboloy said his prayer for God to bless the occasion and the victories of Teodoro must not be taken as an endorsement, adding he was still waiting for "the divine intervention."

At Sunday's rally, Quiboloy called Teodoro "ginagcha (Beloved)." In his speech, he described Teodoro as someone "intelligent (who) has love for country and has capability."

On the stage, Teodoro sat to Quiboloy's right while Estrada was at his left.

Not a subor

The other presidential candidate who arrived was Gordon, who said his presence was not meant to win the endorsement of Quiboloy.

"I am not here to court Pastor Quiboloy. Many are here to court him," he said.

The senator said he respected whoever was the choice of the group.

"I respect your love for God and that is why you are called the sons and daughters of Jesus Christ," Gordon said. "(But) is why today the challenge is for every Filipino to understand that we need unity, stability and moral consensus."

"I feel the vibrancy of your love for Jesus Christ in the kingdom. What this country needs is not a change of men but a change in men, those who put others first, not one's self. That is what the pastor teaches us," Gordon added.

Great again

Liberal Party senatorial candidate Franklin Drilon said the LP standard-bearer, Sen. Benigno Aquino III, was not at the event because he was with his sister Kris Aquino, who was celebrating her birthday.

Other politicians who came were vice presidential candidate Bayan Hernandez Sereno, Juan Ponce Enrile, Jun Lapid, and Jinggoy Estrada, former Sen. Tito Sotto, Rep. Teofisto Guingona III and Rep. Dingdong Plaza. Also present were senatorial candidates Gloria Macapagal, JV Ejercito, Raul Lambino and Silvestre Bello.

Quiboloy said he and his flock were praying for the country to be great again with leaders who have love and compassion for the people.

"I thank the leaders who are here tonight. They dared to stand up to serve the country. That is why I love them, because it no one stands up who are good leaders, evil will prevail and lead us. If not for our good leaders, the country will be ruled by the bad, the plunderers," Quiboloy said.

The Four of the Tabernacles is the list of the three major boards of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

MEMBERS of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in Davao City celebrate the Feast of the Tabernacles then attracted three presidential candidates and a host of other politicians seeking the support of the religious group for the May 10 elections.

NEW POWER BROKER Presidential candidate Gilbert Teodoro and Joseph Estrada flank Pastor Apollo Quiboloy during Sunday's religious celebrations by the Davao-based group.

Who is Pastor Apollo Quiboloy?

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men, he saw Doris Bisaya[ud]-Arroyo's face on the cover of a magazine.

It was 'God's will' that Quiboloy support her bid for the presidency, according to a video produced by the Davao Media Network International, media outfit of a religious group Quiboloy has founded.

Today, with the race presidential nineteen barely three months away, Quiboloy is perhaps the most sought after political endorser in this part of the country.

Candidates are trooping to the religious group's grounds, accompanied at the front of Mayor to seek the blessings of the man who claims to be the "Appointed Son of God." He also claims it million followers and owns his own cable TV company, a string of radio stations and two newspapers.

The name of Quiboloy's religious group is enough to evoke awe—Kingdom of Jesus Christ, The Name Above Every Name.

According to a member of the group, all presidential candidates have confirmed their attendance at a presidential forum to be hosted by the group on March 9 at his 9-hectare compound called "Prayer Mountain."

Administration candidate Jejomar Binay has already got a headstart.

Quiboloy hosted a three hour lunch meeting at the command[ud]s exclusive Victoria's Restaurant with the Lakas-Kampi-CMD standard bearer on Feb. 13, complete with a prayer over.

The forum was invited to the meeting.

Like Disneyland

Inside the high walled compound, Quiboloy held court in the restaurant, which features an 81 chocolate walls dozens of framed photographs of Quiboloy with former presidents, presidential candidates, senators, Cabinet secretaries and high military officials.

Anybody who has the noble intention of serving the country is welcome there," he said.

Quiboloy took his guests on a tour of Prayer Mountain.

Barangay Gov. Miguel Dominguez, walking down to perfectly manicured lawns, said: "It's like Disneyland no? Perfect?"

The compound, surrounded by barrio and pineapple plantations, is guarded by hundreds of workers. Armed guards secure the place.

Inside the compound is Quiboloy's pastoral mansion. Beside it is what is considered the holiest spot in the place—the Prayer house.

Mirrors many are there panel-

PRAY GIVER Pastor Quiboloy prays over administration candidate Gilbert Teodoro inside the Prayer House in Barangay, Davao City.

colored "Millennial dresses" which are occupied by members. There are also two guest houses.

Living myths

Prayer Mountain is actually Quiboloy's birthplace.

Quiboloy is the youngest of the nine children of Jose Quiboloy and Maria Carinen, who migrated to Davao from Lubao, Pampanga, in the 1930s.

On April 25, Quiboloy will turn 63.

Around that time, according to a staffer, the National Geographic Channel will be coming out with a feature on Quiboloy and the Kingdom he founded 16 days. 1, 1985. Previously he was a president of the United Pentecostal Church.

Stories about the difficulties Quiboloy reportedly encountered to establish the Kingdom are something like living myths in the community. It is Quiboloy how he rented houses that often broke down in the middle of craggy roads just to reach the remote villages of Davao.

He only had 13 followers then.

'Kingdom Nation'

A favorite story is how Pastor Apollo survived on bananas for five years.

It's a different story now.

Quiboloy's kingdom can now afford to buy cars—a number of them luxury vehicles. It has also invested in the media, starting with the Sonshine FreeTV Channel 33 in 1995. There are 17 franchise radio stations in the Philippines now.

The sect also has two newspapers Times and Sun. The former is said to be an international circulated weekly for followers in North and South America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Asia.

Its followers refer to their community as a "Kingdom Nation." They claim about 2 million "Kingdom citizens" abroad and 4 million in the country.

On weekdays, members hold bible sessions and prayer services. On Sundays, a "Global Worship" is held at the Kingdom's Cathedral in Barangay Dumlan.

They get their funds from members' tithes representing 10 percent of their income.

In 2000, Quiboloy established Jose Maria College, named after his parents.

Divine guidance

Quiboloy has never been married. He has no children.

"We are his children," said a composed worker.

Quiboloy said God wants the country to be led by someone with a heart for the people and the country.

"I am a spiritual leader," he said. "I take my guidance from the Lord although personally, I have my preference. But because I am holding millions of people who want my guidance, I do not want to commit a mistake. The Lord knows. He puts one down while He puts another up."

"It was not the people who made GMA president. It was really God to heaven who made her the president using the people," he said.

Even though he has already prayed over Gibo, this was not yet an official endorsement, he stressed.

For that, Quiboloy awaits the "vision."

7 candidates slam DOH over free condoms

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president's report of distributing free condoms at the flagship markets to people buying flowers for their Valentine.

Seven presidential candidates were asked yesterday at a forum at the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (Focap) whether they would heed the distribution of free condoms or other forms of artificial birth control.

All seven said they were not keen on following the Duchess, whether in person or through surrogate directors.

Sen. Richard Gordon of the Bagumbayan Party said giving away contraceptives was useless as long as pregnant was properly explained.

"[Because of] poor education, Filipinos cannot even discern whether they need a condom or not," he said.

Information campaign

Gordon and independent candidate Sen. Jose Gonzalo Madrigal agreed that instead of giving away free condoms, the DOH should have conducted an information campaign on the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).

"It should have been information-driven," Madrigal said, adding that HIV which causes AIDS, is transmitted by blood transfusion or sexual contact with an infected person.

Sen. Benigno Aquino III of the Liberal Party pointed out that Congress, not Malacañang, had given over the government programs, meaning, the President had no authority over funds for the DOH or for condoms.

"I suppose responsible parenthood," he said.

However, Aquino raised fears that the Valentine weekend giveaway could be used to justify "the renewal of the same budget" in the future.

In what context?

Environmentalist Sen. Nereza Perlas said he was not against the use of condoms per se but he was concerned why the government was distributing them.

"It depends on the context. It happened on Feb. 14. So, under what context was it done?" he said.

Administration candidate Gilbert Teodoro said the use of family planning methods, whether natural or artificial, remained "the moral choice of the person" concerned.

"The government must be willing to support [the person's decision] in the context of a program. So I am not subscribing any particular method," he elaborated.

Personal choice

However, Teodoro said the issue of HIV/AIDS could involve the use of condoms as a preventive measure.

"HIV is a real and present threat. In the case of a private person consulting with physicians of the government or non-governmental organizations, there is a need to respect the physician-patient privilege, in terms of disease prevention, because of fear of stigma, privacy should remain supreme," he said.

Sen. Eddie Villanueva of the Bangon Pilipinas Movement said his group maintained its opposition to the use of "all forms of abortion because it is murder per se."

The Catholic Church allows only natural family planning and considers the use of artificial contraceptives as abortive.

Villanueva said he would leave it to the parents to guide their children on making such personal choices.

Villanueva added that the government's budget for free condoms should have been allocated to programs that would "propel the economic engine."

Thai experience

Dhongpo Gonzalez JC de los Reyes cited Thailand's experience where its massive campaign by condom use backfired, resulting in higher incidence of AIDS.

"The government must push for moral policies. The condom campaign is a waste of money. It is unconventional and immoral," he said.

Presidential candidates Manny Villar and Joseph Estrada were no-shows at the presidential forum.

48th CITYHOOD FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY (1962-2010)

PAG-ASENSO NG CALOOCAN KITA KAHIT SAAN, TIBAY NG PAMUNUAN, TAGUMPAY NG MAMAMAYAN!

AWARDS & CITATIONS

- *3rd Cleanest City in Metro Manila (DILG)*
- *Out of the Box Award (Mother Earth Foundation) effective Ecological Solid Waste Management*
- *One of the Most Business Friendly City in the Philippines (World Bank and International Finance Corporation)*
- *Top Taxpayer in Government Category (Bureau of Internal Revenue)*
- *Pres. Diosdado Macapagal Memorial Medical Center – Public Service Delivery Audit Award (Civil Service Commission)*
- *Caloocan City Police – Best Police Station and Most Outstanding Responder Award*

MAYOR RECOM ECHIVERRI

From a watery area to the northern part of Metro Manila, Caloocan has evolved into a city on February 16, 1962. Yet the road to progress for the city was not an easy path.

In the past progress was elusive for the city due to mismanagement of the previous administration. Debt was one of the major problems of the local government, coupled with other issues on peace and order, environment, quality of education, and poor road projects. This image of Caloocan was definitely a big turn-off for investors who had wanted to do business in the city.

But it's all behind now. Thanks to the vigorous administration of Mayor Enrico "Recom" Echiverri, also known as the **"REFORMER,"** who worked for development and progress in the city.

Under the management of Echiverri, Caloocan has received numerous awards such as 3rd Cleanest City in Metro Manila; Out of the Box Award of Mother Earth Foundation; Most Business Friendly City; Top Taxpayer in Government Category; Public Service Delivery Audit ; among others.

PUBLIC SERVICES

It was July 2004 when Recom became mayor and started to reform the city. Echiverri started the in-city relocation for the poor residents who were affected by the construction of roads and bridges. Then came the job fairs which gave opportunities to city residents to work here and abroad.

In five years, some 38,000 unemployed benefitted from the job fairs, much higher that the number of beneficiaries of the previous administration which only employed 10,000 residents.

Echiverri also offered free skills training at livelihood centers for 350,000 families.

More than 10,700 families benefitted from the Community Mortgage Program (CMP). Thousands also joined the intervention program through the Food for School Program, Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, Patron Training and Programs, Sustainable Program, Pantawid Kuryente, Kalsa ng Vitamin Program, Subsidized NFA Rice Program and Self-Employment Assistance Program.

Quality education has also become one of the major programs of Echiverri. In the past, the ratio of student to classroom is 60:1. Today, the ratio is 50:1.

Mayor Recom has also built 300 classrooms (5 years) compared to the previous administration (6 years) which only settled for 20 classrooms. Aside from that, the local government also distributed free chairs, books, bags, computers, among others.

At least 114 covered courts were built by Mayor Recom while the previous administration only made 17 covered courts in nine years.

The city's libraries are also in the heart of Mayor Recom. He gave them Medical and Grocery Booklets. These days, some 66,154 medical booklets were distributed for the elderly while those who benefited from grocery booklets reached 27,323.

On peace and order, the Caloocan City Police was awarded best police station and most outstanding responder award for achieving an 88.13 percent crime solution efficiency.

The success of the Caloocan City police only shows that Mayor Recom is supportive to the needs of the local policemen. Echiverri gave them mobile patrol cars and motorcycle for effective campaign against crimes.

The city also holds continuously Mobile Passport Services for five years now. Apart from this, Operation Birthright which aims to provide birth certificate to residents, was also held.

Caloocan City also focused its campaign in protecting Mother Earth when it was awarded several medals one by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Mother Earth Foundation.

The Out of the Box Award of the Mother Earth Foundation also cited Caloocan City for its Ecological Solid Waste Management. Even the barangay offices coordinated in the program of Echiverri in which the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) successfully reduced 27 percent of waste in 188 barangays.

Not to be outdone are the students of Caloocan City who shine in different academic competitions. They also excelled in licensure exams like the Licensure Examination for Teachers, Criminologist Licensure Examination, CPA Board Examination, among others.

Caloocan City also showed excellence in the National Capital Region (NCR) when the city placed third in the National Achievement Test.

Echiverri also launched Sinagtala ang Kabataan sa Taliwas (SIKAT) program, a contest between parents and their children on making assignments.

ROAD TO PROGRESS

Mayor Recom believes that infrastructure is one of the major keys to development. And's why the local government focuses on it.

In more than five years, Mayor Recom has built 610,288 kilometers of road, path walks, drainage in all areas. The road projects have encouraged traders to do business in the city, paving the way for a 115 percent tax revenue in 2004.

The World Bank and the International Finance Corporation also awarded Caloocan City as one of the most business friendly cities in the country. Caloocan City is also known as the Motorcycle Capital of the Philippines.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) also awarded Caloocan City as Top Taxpayer in Government Category for its efficiency in paying taxes. The Commission on Audit (COA) recognized Caloocan City for submitting its financial statement, proving that the city is not hiding anything.

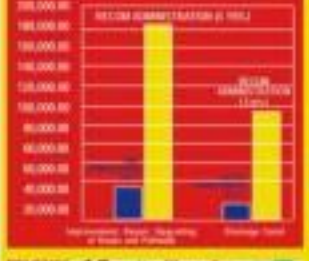
HEALTH SERVICES

The President Diosdado Macapagal Memorial Medical Center (PDMMC) is one one of the well-equipped hospitals in the city, with state-of-the-art facilities. Mayor RECOM has pushed for major health programs in the city. No wonder, the center was cited for Public Service Delivery Audit by the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

Caloocan City also has an ambulance service courtesy of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO). They will soon receive three more units from the same agency.

The city has also established its first animal pound for stray animals.Purchased 2 mobile clinics.

These major changes in Caloocan City are pursued by Echiverri who vowed for more progress and development for the welfare of city residents.



JOBS GENERATED

	68,921	18,610
	14,000	38,000

MANPOWER TRAININGS

	1,839	18,438
	242	1,323
	25,372	48,582

CLASSROOMS BUILT

No. of Classroom	20	300

NEW BUSINESSES AND INVESTMENTS

5,000	14,300

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Circus

IT'S CARNIVAL TIME! THE CIRCUS IS IN TOWN! That was what the newspapers proclaimed last week. And truly, there's a lot of noise being made and a lot of excitement and activity going on because the presidential race is off and running.

The circus as metaphor for the presidential race is very apt because the original circus in Rome was the venue for chariot races. The Circus Maximus was described by Dionysius of Halicarnassus as "one of the most beautiful and admirable structures in Rome." Designed for chariot racing, it was also the venue for gladiatorial combats, wild animal hunts and athletic events. Modern kindred there were in the circus and solid entertainment and souvenirs, and there were always the prostitutes, gamblers, pot watchers and drunks.

EDITORIAL

In the present-day circus that is the presidential electorate, there are the political prostitutes who sell themselves their principles just to be able to run for elective office with assured financial and organizational support and the political butterflies who flit from party to party, from administration to opposition, and back. There are the gamblers who will stake millions of pesos of their own money or of their backers and supporters on the outcome of a presidential race. There are the political fence-sitters and watchers who will observe where the wind blows and run their bet with the most probable winner.

In the Roman circus, the charioteers were a rowdy bunch. They would poison each other's horses and break legs. Foals were often deliberate, and charioteers ran the risk of being dragged to escape under a wheel. In the present-day presidential race, most of the competitors will go to any length to win the race: rally the other candidates' reputations, disseminate poison letters and text messages, and do other things to bring their rivals down to the ground.

The Circus Maximus was the most popular diversion provided by the emperor, the cheering parts of circuses (bread and circuses) which Juvenal satirizes. Dio Chrysostom, writing of the circus parousia of Alexandria in the second century AD, describes them as "a people to whom one need only throw bread and give a spectacle of horses at once they have no interest in anything else."

But the Circus Maximus also served beneficent purposes. From the time of Augustus, it was where the people could make their opinions known and petitions for redress of their grievances. At a time when there were no mass media, the circus gave emperors an opportunity to announce new laws and new taxes. When the horses were not running, the people would use the circus as a forum for raising their complaints against the government.

The present-day presidential circus also serves some positive purposes, such as providing a venue for the discussion of the nation's problems, debates on the issues and the installation of the people's complaints. Still, very often, the glitter and the noise of the circus can distract us from the serious side of presidential campaigning. The people expect to be entertained, and that's why you have the spectacle of show-biz personalities endorsing and campaigning for candidates (and the Comelec-mandated three-hour limit is a statutory acquiescence to this), and candidates making fools of themselves singing, dancing and doing other things that serious, right-thinking individuals would ostensibly not do.

In the United States, the people's love affair with the circus has lasted for more than two centuries. The American circus Barnum and Bailey and the Flingling Brothers are among the most famous names) captivated the national show, the medicine show and vaudeville. It used a ring (here, two or three rings) and added acrobats, a tight-rope walker and clowns. In the three-ring circus that is Philippine elections, we have plenty of acrobats and flying Japanese artists who can fly from one party to another with the greatest of ease. We have tight-rope walkers who can nimbly avoid slipping on controversial issues. And yes, we have clowns—plenty of them—who can entertain people and get elected to high public offices and once in government, become MPAs (non-performing artists) or members of the *comedor de oliveros*.

Elections or circuses, elections as entertainment—that's what we largely have at present. When can we mature as a people and treat elections as a serious matter that requires a lot of thought, deliberation and discernment?

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'Dirty finger'

VIEWPOINT

Jaime L. Hercado

TODAY'S "VIEWPOINT" WOULD HAVE FOCUSED on the no-nonsense Bishop-turned-Metropolitan Archbishop-Governor, the Philippine Republican Conference, the anti-her colleagues liberal Bayanihanians's "intellectually irresponsible" 5.4 percent increase in population. Must "nonsense" were 18 years old—and now voters.

The population in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao also soared by 3.7 percent. Some of 39 Asian countries boasted like the ARMM. Is this realm demographic?

We have wider sight of 18 presidential candidates. As in the 1992, 1998 and 2004 elections, the next president will get at least a plurality of votes, political scientist Jose Abueva notes. Will the ARMM phantom 14-year-olds be the voters?

Recent headlines anticipated those questions. "Military Defies SC Court on 43," bespeaks human rights. Despite a writ of habeas corpus, issued by the Supreme Court, the military and the police didn't present 43 detained health workers.

"We had no time to coordinate security measures for the transfer," Col. Aurelio Rebolid stressed. Ha ha, ha ha. Reason me. The gall and implausibility. This is not Burundi.

Wasn't it lovely to hear "Gen Dagot" a high court order on his own? Were you born yesterday?

"Inexcusable," snapped presidential candidate Gilbert Teodoro.

Commission on Human Rights probers, meanwhile, reported that some detainees were tortured. Military shall-shuffling "pose against 'incendiary,' the very essence of habeas corpus," CHR Chair Leila de Lima said. Belated presentation of detainees only adds insult to further injury? Injury.

"Worse, if any," Napoleonic precedents," answer Junior Honorable Panaro Aquod. "You're the biggest armed group in the country... Freedom fighting bother."

End of lecture? asked Sun Star's Frank Malong. "Such insolency would have earned swift and severe sanctions from the Court in other jurisdictions."

Was this the heavy "good-spoiled-cop" chill? AFP Commander in Chief Devin Mangudat Iberquoddin's whimper. The writ, after all, is not his (Malacañang's) matter. Indeed, Benigno Aquino III enjoyed the privilege in 1215. It has become part and parcel of the law to demonstrate contempt.

Fellow court orders? AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Victor Ferrolo muttered. He didn't phone. Did order to habeas corpus dwindle in the 2nd Infantry Division learned. he coupled a "to-whom-it-may-concern" address. Jist "the general staff"?

The writ enables any person to break free from illegal detention. "If accused, for every mass leave, alone or camera, against anything else is not law," Thomas Jefferson wrote.

Thus, habeas corpus has been a keystone in all our constitutions. Not in North Korea and Iran. So, why do some AFP officers chase Progressive and Liberal?

Even dictator Ferdinand Marcos dared not shaft publicly the writ. In 1972, 20 provinces remained under martial law were handed to the Supreme Court for habeas corpus petitions.

He never nudged in a "Black Maria" prison van between ex-detainees Amando Doronila of the Daily Mirror and the Philippines News Service's Manuel Crisostomo. Colonel Crisostomo wouldn't lock one with in. "Are we comrades?" Tribune Phoet Luis Beltran asked.

Retired to the Court earlier were Joaquin Bautista and Mariano Ibañez of the Manila Times, Teodoro Gonzaga Jr. and Napoleon Rama of the Philippine Free Press and other journalist-detainees. Secretary Benigno Aquino Jr., Jose Diokno and Horacio Morla and Constitutional Convention delegates like Tito Guingona returned to separate ways.

Despite threats, National Press Club president Eddie Monterdeo and others lodged habeas corpus petitions. Among our pro-bono lawyers were Jess Lacsina, Takada, Ibañez, Orendain and Judge Ortega.

"You can't feed most of them," Johns Aurora rationalized as the Marcos Court justices filed in. "But the writ may provide a shield, however thin."

The pressed sight on the horizon, Marcos unilaterally released some detainees. He (Gen) dismissed the plea as "moot and academic."

The Marcos Supreme Court legitimized actions of the President, constitutional scholar Fr. Joaquin Bernas, SJ, wrote. With the suspension of habeas corpus, "denial of denial of a summary need never materializing." The writ's suspension also robbed the right to bail.

Before he could spend it at the Manila International Airport, an assassin cut down Benigno Aquino Jr. Today's new detainees should end his unaddressed speech.

"If a most pressing, other martial law has illegally been lifted, that the Supreme Court has April ruled it can no longer entertain petitions for habeas corpus for persons detained under a Presidential Commitment Order," he wrote. "Other courts all so-called national security courts. And under present circumstances (that) can come almost anything."

Since that filipinos closed the decision into exile, Cameron Supreme lived supine Supreme Court justices, and Despite Power restored suppressed rights, including habeas corpus.

Pulling to leave from Heaven today's military would draw cops with this critical human right. Will Commander-in-Chief Aquino plus along?

The shredding of habeas corpus would be added to the raging vehicle is merely enough, as it is.

(Email: jaimehercado@gmail.com)

Join the NPA

THERE'S THE RUB

Commodo de Quiros

THE AFP IS THE BEST REGISTER OF THE RIS.

"But I rebel people need to stop during martial law. Dr. Marcos is the best executor of the RIS," What's import of course was that Marcos' and not the AFP's opponents and other troops were driving the post in particular, who were first in line to listen, and the arena of the rebels.

That's still pretty much true today. Because, get us once, simply leaving national politics. The only difference is that ORM is less supportive now and the AFP's opponents and other troops were driving the post in particular, who were first in line to listen, and the arena of the rebels.

But not if today's AFP can help it. Over the last several years, it has been seemingly. It quite unwillingly, self-refining the RIS. It has done so by arresting doctors and health workers who have been "misidentified" as rich enough the post in plain clothes and government forces, arresting them of being members of the NPA. If not indeed gunning them down presumably for being them with them. With what, police guns?

In latest caper up the ante on it. Earlier this month, it arrested 43 people who were holding a health seminar in Morong, Rizal, charging them with being members of the NPA. Despite an order from the Supreme Court for them to produce the arrested people, they have not done so. Citing all sorts of excuses, from the sheer number of the arrested, which they say exhaustively, to the Human Counting being their forces, which they say is proof they are really CPA members.

You can understand why Cayabyab is fit to be tied. It was in. Col. Noel Detoyato, spokesperson of the Army's 2nd Infantry Division, who regaled the high-ups about Cayabyab's having to the AFP United proof of their guilt. That is like saying that the Antipodeans are engaged in a conspiracy with Iraq because a Pinoy is there however, and the Pinoys defended Iraq in his unprofessional trial. When in fact the only topic you can say there is that they deserve our comfort, being united in a common pursuit of freedom, whatever freedom it defines.

But to go back to what I was saying. The AFP's logic has always been that once it the people they arrest, as alleged or left, the citizens or health workers, they are also NPA, who are merely using health care to advance their causes to facilitate arms. Well, if so, then that is not a good reason to arrest them, or torture them, or kill them. That is called of a good excuse to join them. If there cannot things done or humanely and fair and legal by the rule, the enforcement of the law, particularly Silver Bluebs. If, the arrests of the suspects being professionals or NGO members, to bring life to the thing, then we can do more than support their cause. If, on the other hand, the cases contest the people who are responsible for health care, saving other cases, or not provide it because of greed, and cause them to make the military to arrest, abduct or kill the people who do because they make them look bad, then we ought to stop joining causes to find cases.

Easy enough for the military to refute the claims of the AFP that they are health workers or people who have something to do with health care. All they have to do is produce them, and prove they have no such credentials. They will have credentials for something health by saying he/she/it plans to use weapons. The military says the huge number of the detainees poses a huge security risk. Well, we only have to worry if they are a risk. If they are in fact health workers, then they pose a risk only to status the which they threaten to undercut. Indeed, if they are in fact health workers and NPA or not, they are only related to the NPA, then by their sheer number they pose the risk only of outnumbering the public about the prisoners of their cause.

Intellectual, from a broader viewpoint, the injustice of all this lies in the policy of waging war against the NPA, which has taken the form in child's time of massacring political activists, who are largely peasants and youth, and making peace with the warlords, which has taken the form in Gloria's time of coddling thugs like the Ampatuans. When the warlords that has arisen over the ages says we should make peace with honorable enemies and wage war against dishonorable ones.

The NPAs could come to government is based on principle. Call those principles socialism, call those principles anarchy, call those principles misguided, these are still principles. And they still have the power to force people to risk life and limb and forge the commitment of one life to make others. It is no small irony that the one who pursued a policy of peace with the rebels, thereby enforcing a period of relative tranquility and prosperity was a general, Fidel Ramos. And the one who waged a war of attrition against them, thereby ushering a period of armed struggle, divisiveness and bloodshed, was a usurper, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The warlords' opposition is not just to government, it is to society. It is society that they fear, it is to unity. They do not just defy authority they defy decency. The warlords have taken up arms, or rather put on uniforms, not for reasons that have nothing to do with the principle, other than the principle, which their patron in Malacañang has made the ruling principle of this country of ruling forever. Or until such time as they are overthrown or defeated by another thug. It is medieval, it is atavistic, it is barbaric. And yet we are entertained on the one, or from the public has not bowled angrily at the inhuman massacre of political activists, while we perpetrate the second, even after the public has bowled watchfully at these warlords, and accepted the necessity of their existence.

Death to our enemies? Is that the upside down world, by all means let us dance that.

And join the NPA.

Regrets

SINCE CELEBRITY BABE BONDAGDEG RECENTLY cited the growing regret among supporters of LP vice presidential candidate Mar Roxas that "he goes up [in presidential ratings] so easily due to the presidential ill sympathy and unconscionable that corrupt people" after the passing of Cory Aquino, Babe cited several reasons for this growing sentiment among Mar's supporters, among them, that Mar already has a political machinery in place and is not a newcomer like Noynoy Aquino; that Noynoy "hasn't proved he passed," Babe also noted that between the LP machinery, Mar is far more experienced in leadership and maturity.

The sentimental misery Mar's followers is undeniable, but I do think it is that the political temperatures around Noynoy quickly outlived what the presidency will mean, and underscored Mar's shortcomings any way Among those who vigorously opposed Mar's accession to the LP's gained ground, former Senate President Jovito Salonga, who called on the party to uphold due process and not simply acclamation.

* * *

This sentiment is borne out by recent surveys. From this sentiment itself, Noynoy is now to establish cred for with Pilar, whereas Mar is assuming ahead of Loren Legarda. In fact, this is now the compelling Noynoy as the perceptible validation that Noynoy may be the more ready for this big league. For one thing, his campaign line about not raising taxes may be good sound byte for the mass he's targeting, but this could jeopardize the economy he could face. Mar has a track record already as the country has to deal with the budget deficit that has ballooned to P300 billion.

Then, too, Noynoy, obviously disturbed by his ratings drop, now sounds polished and confident enough to handle the presidency. Columnist Emil Amado wrote that when the MOPC recently invited Noynoy to be guest of honor and speaker at the "President's Night" reserved for him, his response was that he was not available as he is going on the "Island" Amado remains in the MOPC board. Contrary this with that of Villar who recently beyond the invitation of the Makati Business Club, despite the fact that Noynoy's most lovable host-

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

ness supporters are there. Before beginning his talk, Villar disarmed his audience by flashing a smile-grin and saying, "I know most of you are not for me." An heretofore super-spoiled ex-BSBC leader as being "improved" while he talk.

* * *

Another reason may be the apprehension that Noynoy may not be able to control all the electoral and shifty elements around him. Noynoy's campaign already formed a shadow Cabinet, but in the process his key supporters have been quarrelling over major positions. There's also the backbiting of the LP's good vs. evil battle as we trace the exposes on the Hacienda Luisita issue. Even the compadre the Lopezes are made from the side of them leads to the ICTSI's project and how its grant of a free right of way has jacked up the Bacoor's value immensely, and yet their tenants are klukluker have remained mired in poverty.

* * *

Gretchen Ganzon-Fores's "Anybody but Gibo" remark over Vhiz on TV last week created waves in political circles, even as it reportedly made her husband, former Iskwela Cabinet, Jose Apostolate his presidential ambition now "too strong". The outburst revealed a facet of the Ganzons family that the public hasn't seen. Reports say that although Gretchen herself and the majors of Negros Occidental, which is dominated by the party her husband founded, rose by one to warn them against supporting taken presidential candidate Gibo Teodoro. In fact, all of those offered regrets and not they had already committed to Gibo when they joined the "One Muscat" movement formed two weeks ago in his support. Out of 16 governors in the Visayas, 11 governors led by Cebu's Gwen Garcia are said to be for Gibo, two for Noynoy, one for Estrada, one for Villar and another still undecided. One of the pro-Gibo governors, Sally Perez of Antique, an active member of the NPC, and chair of Region VI Development Council, spoke over radio to Gibo and advised Gwendam that instead of being scorched of Gibo, she and "Boss Eusing" should be proud of their nephew actions they had helped to get to where he is now, and the honor he brings to their hands with his high-level positive campaign.

* * *

Ople leader Blas Lopez Ongpin, daughter of Lopez Group chair Oscar Lopez and head of Knowledge Channel (KC), will host a first-of-a kind town this Wednesday, named "Lead the Change: An Evening of Conversation for Action," at the Shangri-La Tent in Makati City. It will gather "thought leaders" from business and civil society and the public sector, who can contribute ideas on how best to meet 21st-century challenges in education, entertainment, health, governance, population and the environment. The town will have a plan of action on how KC can be used "to bridge learning edge and skill gaps," and help Filipino schools facilitate learn better through educational television.

The guest of honor and speaker is Brian Greenberg and model, famous philanthropist Peggy Dulany Rockefeller, daughter of American statesman and billionaire David Rockefeller. A Rockefeller born on graduate with a doctorate in education from Harvard's Graduate School of Education, Peggy Rockefeller has always been involved in fighting poverty in 1987 she founded and chairs the New York-based Synergos, which addresses global poverty and social injustice by working with partners in more than 30 countries and regions. She has also served on more than 30 non-profit and corporate boards, including the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Africa-America Institute, aside from a long association with the United Nations. In the second visit to Manila, among her activities will be a meeting with members of Global Philanthropists Circle (GPC) and Synergos and a visit to a school established by KC.

From rhetoric to action

I WAS PLANNING TODAY'S COLUMN ON THE way down from Baguio's last Sunday, noting the many campaign materials tucked in trees and telephone poles and hanging from wires and cables. I was going to make a count and mention all the candidates violating the law, and I contemplated that some candidates whom I support [when I will not name for fear of being forced to go on leave] had plastic pennants nailed to trees, too.

This was when I remembered a little dust-up among friends some years ago over the issue of campaign materials. One of us was running for national office and one meeting all of us posting along false found most of the overpasses for around with plastic streamers bearing his name and slogan. It consumed a friend, an environmentalist, who declared soon after that he wasn't voting for our friend precisely because of his "excesses" campaign materials.

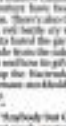
What, now? I can see candidates tread, I asked him about the and he could only reply that his campaign had relied on "suppliers" to put up the posters and banners around the country and that he didn't know what they were doing. "But we're asking them not to take chances," he said, and, true enough, his posters disappeared from the railings, and like others, too, these were promptly replaced by materials of other candidates.

Well, I thought, it's not entirely the people candidate to know what supporters are doing, but I also think the candidates are the ones for the entire campaign machinery, and what the machinery does affects materially on the candidate. And if we're thinking of a campaign period that would have made global warming a team issue in your campaign, and vowed to obey the rule of law...then running a "green" campaign is not just an option but an obligation.

* * *

SO I'm giving candidates the benefit of the doubt and assuming that perhaps "green" campaigning is still such a novelty that political parties and campaign managers have not thought out what steps to take to win elections while cutting down on trash, protecting trees, and respecting the environment.

The Philippine Coalition launched last May a campaign for "Zero Waste" Polls with the cap-



AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

port of Comelec Commissioners Rene Sarmiento, Maximiliano Jimenez, Nicodemo Ferrer, Lucenito Tagle, Cabucan Bishop Diosgo nino S. Iniguez, Jr., and the Mac Earth Foundation. As part of that campaign, they have released guidelines on running a "clean and green" campaign, which would minimize the use of campaign waste. If the candidates only cares to march themselves with us, too, there are the guidelines.

For starters, all candidates should assign a person or team to the campaign committee who will responsible for "greening" the campaign strategies and activities.

Second, candidates should refrain from using excessive campaign materials such as tarpaulins, pamphlets, posters, streamers, decals, cloth and tarpaulin streamers, and other campaign paraphernalia.

As much as possible, propaganda materials should be re-use or made from recycled paper and carry a friendly reminder that says, "Para sa ating kalikasan at kalusugan, huwag pong skalat, tambak o sunugin," or its equivalent in local languages.

Candidates should refrain from using campaign materials that are hastily erected or erected such as confetti, buntings and balloons, which often get burned or discarded in uneven ways, says the guidelines.

Politicos should ignore the rises of propaganda materials that can harm and even kill them, and resist public or vandalism to popularize themselves.

* * *

FOR LITTER-FREE campaign meetings, rallies and related activities, the EcoWaste Coalition recommends the following:

• Ban the use of confetti, exploding firecrackers or releasing balloons in campaign events.

• Refrain from using styrofoam, plastic bags and other single-use containers for volunteers' meals and drinks.

• Set up segregated waste bins for biodegradable and non-biodegradable discards in campaign venues/activities.

• Designate "eco-volunteers" to look after the bins and guide the public in the proper separation of their discards.

• Clean up right after the campaign event.

• Hire eco-haulers to handle the segregated wastes for recycling and composting.

It still isn't too late for candidates to issue these same guidelines to their campaign staffs and supporters, and to adhere to them in their campaign activities. Let's not have the streets of our cities and towns littered with plastic banners and the like. Maybe the next time I go up to Tagaytay, I'll find more trees spared from plastic posters and the clusters of campaign materials gone or at least significantly reduced. I can always do an update count next time. Promise mamore!

* * *

SEEL on the environment, the Earth Day blog work is setting out just candidates and political parties that advocate the missing climate to formally declare what they're willing to do to save the Earth.

To mark their 14th anniversary the Network has launched the "10 Million Movement" to get 10 million Filipinos to commit to "10 easy steps" as individual's pledge to "commit to any form of act for Mother Earth." People's responses to the question: "How are you more?" (What's your #1 act?) will determine what other Filipinos can modify personally or behalf the good of saving the Earth are pieces, one act at a time.

Rebet Ocampo, president of EcoSys Bay Network, says the aim is not not be anything major but simply to inspire individuals to "change a plan when breaking teeth, turning off lights upon leaving a room, shutting off power for an hour, not littering, segregating waste, composting and recycling, are good enough.

The Network hopes to plant 1,000 eggs-up tables in SM malls, as well as in schools and churches. Volunteers are also invitable (for hours in front new schools, offices and neighborhoods. The target is to sequester 10 million pledged "Green Acts" by April 22.

We are not Obama's America

FOLLOWING IS THE HELD CRITICAL STEPS OF Amando Doronila, who gave the keynote presidential debate congress review, allow me to review the constitutional commentary of the outstanding marketing executive Mahar Mangahas, which appeared in yesterday's front page. In the first place, an analyst ready to judge "the Internet and social networking sites" to the "technological weapons of choice" in the 2010 presidential election might to know some kind of real online. Google has name and the name of the clash rank for branded, followers and gets ...links to you today's contributed commentary!

In other words, aside from one other reference I found, a 2007 news story about the mid-term elections that attributed a quote to him, Mahar's online presence is limited to the common entries by common websites. His business (he was for Ibay Research and Strategic Studies doesn't even seem to have a website. (I cannot say for sure, but after poring over the first four or five pages of search results, I am led to think the twitter follows spoiler) of deliberate obscurity.)

But if Mar held a reputation for presence or posting, the substance of his commentary isn't. It is common social-science polution: it is heavily Obama-centric, and readily assumes, indeed asserts, that "Obama's campaign [the digital sources of his political entity] were the hi-tech precursors of the technological weapons of choice being used in Philippine politics, including the Philippines." For those is no evidence—I repeat, no evidence—that any presidential campaign in the running for May 10 is emulating the Obama's political army. Certainly, there are cell phones, and data-mining servers, and keyboard for sure, but to maintain there for the Philippine version of the "biggest digital activism campaign in the world" is wishful thinking.

That last quote is from Mary Joyce, who throughout most of the political election period in 2008 was the operations manager of the

NEWSSTAND

John Nery

Obama campaign's New Media group. (I must remind here that I met Joyce only last year.) What struck me most about her experience were how organized and disciplined the entire campaign set-up was, and how much of a role the campaign's digital media operations played in collaborating with so-called old media. From Joyce, I learned that Obama's presidential campaign, many are indeed "wired" (a word which Mahalella describes, on entire generations after the computer age started, approvingly and in quotes, as "the language of the computers age"). But wired in the Philippines is different from wired in the United States. (As to the simple answer to the fallacy that lies at the intersection of these which both, treacherously, that Obama-style campaigning will reshape Philippine politics.

At best, only about a fourth of the Philippine population has access to the Internet; compare that with that in the United States, which used 2008 the world's biggest population of Internet users, at over 200 million. Obama could raise half a billion dollars online; that's where the people were. Obama had over six million fans on Facebook. Obama had a mailing list of over two million...because that's where the people were. Despite the number of cell phones in use in the Philippines, the online action here is not (yet) comparable to that in Obama's America. To say it is to mislead the public.

I would be the last person to say digital campaigning has no role to play. In the first place, online is the only medium without specific spending limits; it is a gray area candidates will certainly explore. (The digital ads have made law. Mahar Villar's unelected presence even there too.) In the second place—and this is the crucial explanation of experts who have successfully used the internet—what online does very well, even in the Philippine setting, is to create buzz. It is not (yet) a tool for converting the undecideds or for raising substantial campaign donations, but it can certainly be used to create word of mouth, to pique public curiosity and interest, to drive old media coverage.

For the 2010 race, the deciding factors will continue to be TV exposure and free media.

* * *

Speaking of buzz, take a look at this list of the most-read columns of 2009, online. (A couple of months ago, I had the chance, as I thought I'd oblige.) Ranked according to number of page views, as computed by Inquirer.net:

1 Who wants the Aquino	Ric Saloma
2 Why I'm not voting	Evangelina Carino
3 Noynoy	Ric Saloma
4 Why I am for Noynoy	Ric Saloma
5 Why I am not Noynoy	Ric Saloma
6 Dear Cory	Ric Saloma
7 Why did Noynoy not run for senator and not for	Ric Saloma
8 Dear Noynoy	Ric Saloma
9 Thanks, Cory	Ric Saloma
10 Thanks, Cory, but not yet	Ric Saloma
11 Why I am for Noynoy	Ric Saloma
12 Noynoy	Ric Saloma
13 Noynoy's wedding and other plans	Ric Saloma
14 My way or goodbye	Ric Saloma
15 The morality of the Hong Kong hostage	Evangelina Carino

* * *

jnery@inquirer.com.ph; johnnery.wordpress.com

Love isn't a fling

EVERY VALENTINE'S DAY, I RECEIVE E-MAIL AND TEXT messages about romance and love. My favorite has always been a quote from Fr. Pedro Arrupe, SJ: "Fall in love, stay in love and it will decide everything."

Father Arrupe tells us to fall in love. And we all do. We fall in love and, as he said, it influences everything that we do. And because it's such a wonderful, beautiful thing, our celebration of love in the 14th of February.

The love he speaks of though need not be romantic. In fact, Father Arrupe was probably alluding to a love for the truth, for what is right, and perhaps, given that he was a Catholic priest, for God.

YOUNG BLOOD

Tamara Oblas Tan

We went to Assisi what the young people studying school in Assisi (thoughts our current issues? We welcome contributions from the

I clearly remember a Valentine's Day several years ago, when a group of students, alumni and faculty gathered in front of Lopezman to listen to updates on the latest happenings on the 1986 EDSA scandal and the Ati-Luisita fave. The man a gathering of people who wanted to learn more about these issues and to see what they could do to find the truth, to work for accountability and reform for a country that they loved.

So that year, Valentine's Day was spent with my friend Donna, and our date place was gate 2-3 of the historic de Manila University. There were students shouting, banners flying, people standing on the U-turn slot blocks. Traffic slowed down, cars honked and drivers and passengers participated in this democratic exercise.

Exciting? Yes. The people's intensity during that event and all the events that followed were contagious. But we went to a safe place, near the gates of our university. And I remembered that we were still protected by the law. What law would we go to work for changes in our beloved country?

A few years passed and one wonders again. Plaza strength to break, to pull, to fight a reality? Was it enough to show the world how much I loved the Philippines?

These little bursts of mass action seem to blaze on bloodshed are like romantic books with love in our country. The height of Edsa, the Edsa Dos repeat. The passion of our hopes and frustration. We take to the streets—and then what? The frustration with the rebels with a cause start to fade, and a year later the problems continue to exist.

It is one thing to mobilize people to go to the streets and rally and it is another thing to mobilize people every week to rally the streets and work. It is just not enough—out of our mass responses—to find the roots of the problem and not just attack the problem, and move from there. What has to be done to address the problem of poverty? Lack of integrity? Lack of transparency? The epoch was felt during the rally, but was this call for change merely an infatuation?

This is not to discount the importance or the influence of the peaceful street protests that have taken place and that continue to take place. Since they are important, why should they be reserved for the months? Why take a stand only when the whistle blowers come out and the media go nuts? Taking a stand should be something we are always doing. Demanding reforms when we see the need for it. Being a community, a mass peaceful and prosperous country. One passion to build a better country should always be burning, so that, even when the issues do pour the down we do not forget or become complacent or callous.

The rally spirit lives the Philippines. It takes brave hearts to come out and be heard. It takes a lot to stop our people we cannot just be brave, we must be kind as well.

Loyalty is not be puppy love; it's a mature commitment, a choice. And there are those who have fallen head over heels in love with the country and continue to love her through thick and thin, in darkness and in battle. We are this through the one-fifth theme—through the blood, sweat and tears of our living heroes.

I have had the honor to meet many of these men and women—individuals from different sectors of society—who tirelessly work with or without the world's attention. There are hundreds of thousands of Filipinos who chose their love for our country by living in the slums and the provinces, like the Pahinga volunteer who patiently helps scholars with their homework, the Teach FIRST kids who give public school students tears so that they will see our country through a different lens, the Bata school teachers who instill a sense of pride and Filipino identity in the hearts of preschoolers, and the citizens who have chosen to live one step out of a traffic violation or through the bureaucracy.

It is the ordinary Filipino that inspires me. In fact, it is the ordinary Filipino that has taught me how to love. I have learned to grow in faith and love for my God and my country through the fine example of the Loreto Edilogo care taker couple that work hand-in-hand with the rising poor through thick and thin.

These community builders have sacrificed time and resources, building trust and chasing hope, building homes and sharing their own dreams with people who were not family to them. They chose to love those who are difficult to love. And that is the real meaning of love as enunciated 1Cor. 13: staying with them even after the novelty and good feelings have run out demands faithfulness. The case-takers choose to spend their time with their new families. They choose to trust the poor to support them, to love them.

During the month of February, the whole world celebrates the day of love. The Philippines, more than most countries we love, but our love for the Philippines, for democracy and for the truth. Twenty-four years ago, the Filipino was able to show the world how much he loved his country and Edsa was the hottest date place in town. The passion was high, the feelings intense and, I would like to believe, the love was true. I would also like to believe that it wasn't a one date affair.

According to Father Arrupe, we should fall in love, but more importantly stay in love.

Fighting for the truth, for social justice, for love should not be a thing. Love for our country and for the Filipino should be a commitment.

Tamara Oblas Tan, 27 years old, is a full-time worker for United Holdings Community Development Foundation Inc.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph, together with your address, age, school, course and your youth's certificate, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

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Stop nursing's decline

LETTERS

THE 2003 PASSING PERCENTage is the latest Nursing Licensure Examination for the lowest in history, while the total of 96,462 who took that exam is the highest number we record. As students, we are quite alarmed at and frustrated with the low passing percentage because it shows that the quality of nursing education in the Philippines continues to decline.

According to the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), there are now 463 nursing schools in the country, 40 taught us, they produce thousands of graduates every year. For years now, we have observed that we students are not getting enough training because of the lack of facilities and disproportionate patient-student ratio. Ideally, the ratio should be two students to every patient. But at present, it is 15 students to one patient. As a result, we are having difficulty in meeting the number of (patient in medical) cases we are required to submit (in. Many students do not have to exercise their "creativity and resourcefulness" in meeting this graduation requirement, without necessarily benefiting cases or performing the various nursing procedures.

Because of government laxity, nursing education in the Philippines has become for private colleges and universities a business venture, primary objective is to make enormous profits. Be specifically our parents and guardians, have to bear the continued burdens of exorbitant fees, high-priced school services and hospital affiliation costs. So there is not increase in government quality education, which is impossible to obtain without adequate facilities, modern equipment and sufficient clinical exposure.

What can be in to ensure quality education enhancement? The government's stand, which has been requiring nurses in other countries? The Commission on Higher Education's, which has tailored the nursing curriculum to job qualifications abroad?

Education, especially in health-related courses like nursing, should serve our own people's needs first and foremost. The government's only concern is to produce nurses for "export" to bring in more OFW remittances and become the profits of training schools are not regulated, this problem—poor training, substandard—will continue.

In the end, we students suffer from the poor quality of nursing education. Reality bloodies! As recent DBM's bailout therefore that we, students, graduated—hopefully, are on demand after is due so. After all, we have all the right to demand quality education for which we are charged and are paying for. We are health service providers, after all, and we allow ourselves to be forever treated as commodities, to be manufactured and sold for export.

—KEVIN YVES JUANE SOUNDON,
secretary general,
Health Students' Action Office,
Ugnayan Building, Remedios Circle,
Ermita, Manila

NGCP denies discrediting ERC

THE IS IN RESPONSE TO THE news item "Winners to have to own utilization" (Inquirer, 1/11/10) written by Dayne Gonzales. In his report, Gonzales quoted Emmanuel S. Medrianoa of the Makabayan Coalition of the Philippines (MCP) that the Energy Regulatory Commission to allow the firm to recover its losses from the bombed towers, but there has been no reply from the ERC."

Kindly correct the news story in accordance to the writer about the issue. The last time he publicly spoke about NGCP's Mindanao transmission projects in general was on a forum in Cagayan de Oro City in October 2009. And he did not comment anything to discredit or question the actions of the ERC during that forum which was attended by local media.

Upon checking with the Inquirer Mindanao Bureau, we found out that Gonzales managed to see his past, shortly after we spoke with him on Dec. 26 to clarify his article. In our meeting, he claimed that the article he submitted was edited by the "desk."

And for the record, we wish to reiterate that NGCP did not state or even insinuate that the ERC was not acting on NGCP's applications for the recovery of loss.

Due to force majeure cases, the typhoons and the bombings, NGCP is fully aware that applications are subject to evaluation and public hearings and that the ERC is acting in accordance with due process and procedures. We would like to assure the ERC, the power customers and other stakeholders in the industry that NGCP will abide by these processes and by subsequent decisions of the regulatory body.

We hope this clarifies the issue and corrects any misimpression that the story might have created.

—ROLLY CARTIN,
special assistant
to the president and head,
Corporate Affairs
Department,
National Grid Corporation
of the Philippines

There was no misimpression that the NGCP was dead waiting for the ERC. It was clear in the story cases by Ti some Gonzales that the NGCP's petition had not yet been acted upon.

It is also normal for the desk to edit it stories sent by correspondents for clarity. Nothing was fabricated or added to the correspondent's story.

As for Mr. Gonzales he resigned before the bureau managed to assign him to cover anything. A report based on a forum done months before catchment was indicating it is the article. For the record, his story was received only on Jan. 14 and was edited for publication on the same day for the next day's issue.

—Inquirer Mindanao Bureau

Poverty used as campaign issue

THIS ELECTION SEASON POLITicians, to promote their respective candidacies, are adopting poverty as a major issue. Plain and pure and simple, they are campaigning the helpless, underprivileged and unskilled Juan de la Cruz are being promised repeatedly like a mantra.

Presidential candidate Manny Villar's television campaign, for one, has now become a household jingle that my sisters and nephews happily sing together. Villar's anti-poverty advocacy appears believable although questionable to those who have seen his rise to P-worthy. Still, my campaign that promises to uplift the poor and protect them from grasping poverty arouses a glint of hope even among cynics, despite the glaring inconsistencies in the campaigns of the aforesaid politician and their think tanks know they can bank on and poverty bitch Idola to advance their candidacies.

The question, however, is this: Does anti-poverty campaign promises truly responsive to the cries of the poor?

I have not made up my mind as to who I'm going to vote for, but this campaign line strikes home. Having undergone a nailing marketing (if nobody's corrupt, nobody will be poor)!

—JULY L. JALLORINA,
consultant on special resources,
Office of the Governor of
Samar, Inquirer,
legaspi_jayat@yahoo.com

Release health workers from military detention now

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION'S list of human rights violations—crimes against the Filipino people—just longer by the day, unfortunately in the run-up to the May 10 elections.

Six, concerned migrant Filipinos in Europe (Austria), are appalled to learn of the illegal raid/arrest and detention of 43 health workers in Camp Capinpin, Tanay, Rizal on Feb. 6, 2010.

According to media statistics, some 16 Filipinos die without receiving medical treatment, owing to extreme poverty. This is why even the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) recognizes that in countries where the existing health care system falls short of insuring the health of the people, community-based health programs (CBHPs) could be utilized and developed. CBHPs are critical of the traditional approaches to health work and focus mainly based on empowerment and long-term solutions to social, political and economic injustices.

It is therefore incomprehensible why health workers who merely choose to practice their profession is medically underserved communities are labeled red and considered enemies of the state.

The Arroyo administration's list of human rights violations includes more than 1,118 extrajudicial killings, 204 enforced disappearances, 1,206 victims of torture and the detention of more than 100 political prisoners since 2001.

We, tolerate our continued commitment to genuine democracy and our solidarity with all those agonizing and protesting civil and political freedoms.

We demand:

1. That the health workers illegally arrested and illegally detained in Camp Capinpin, Tanay Rizal be immediately released, safe and unharmed.

2. That the confiscated personal belongings of the victims be returned immediately to them.

3. That an independent fact-finding and investigation team be immediately formed, to conduct an immediate, impartial and thorough investigation into this case, with a view to publishing the findings and bringing those responsible to justice to accordance with international standards.

4. That the military stop the killing and targeting of human rights defenders as "members of front organizations of the communists" and as "enemies of the state."

5. That the Philippine government live up to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to all the major human rights instruments of which it is a signatory.

—MANUEL MADRIDEJO,
chair Bisig in Austrian factory
for Integrity, Resistance and Social
Transformation; Pinaw Rivet,
migrantsinternational.
@gmail.com

A PROTESTER in front of the Court of Appeals accuses the Arroyo administration of complicity in the alleged torture of the "Morong 43."

Handy, helpful tool in quest for clean, honest elections

THE INQUIRER DID DOPE A great job and service to our nation's quest for a clean and honest election and a well-informed electorate with its special report on the Comelec's new "handy" automobile page article on the May 10 automated election process. ("Get ready for the May 10 polls," Inquirer, 2/7/10)

The article will serve as a very useful guide not only for the voters on how the Precinct Count Optical Scan (PCOS) machine works, but also for candidates to immediately know the allowed propaganda materials, the limits of their rights to use them, and the prohibited acts during the election period. Significantly, the highly informative are the data on the number of election positions at stake, number of registered voters, number of PCOS machines and different types of official ballots to be printed per district or province, and the proper use of the PCOS and the filling-up of the ballots.

The article will be very handy for anyone who will give a lecture on the dynamics of the May 10 elections. I already flipped one to my own use. Now I do not need to carry voluminous copies of election laws and regulations during my lecture on that topic since the article has it all.

Congratulations for coming up with this very informative article.

—ROBELLO S. MACADINAL,
election lawyer,
Philsmith Village, Las Piñas City

Declare 2010 Year of the Thomasian

THIS YEAR'S ACLL OF HER, 6, 2009, President Joseph Estrada signed Presidential Proclamation 203 declaring 2000 "The Year of UPMC." It was the result of a two-long campaign that 3—a former DPW in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia—initiated in 1999. The unit rose to honor master-mason Juan Nakpil and recognize overseas Filipinos' immense contribution to the general good of our country with the hope that it would jump-start renewed efforts in promoting their welfare and well-being. Unfortunately, I was not able to attend the actual conferring ceremony held which were overshadowed by the disastrous swing and dual calamity hills which were overshadowed by more last.)

Last July, I sent a letter to President Macapagal-Arroyo proposing another declaration of 2010 as the "Year of the Thomasian." I believe this would be a very good way of beginning the second decade of the 21st century and the perfect prelude to the global celebration of UST's Quincentennial in 2011. February is half over and it seems no action has been taken on the letter, except its referral by the President's Correspondence Office to the Board of the Presidential Legislative Liaison Office on May 1, 2009. It is, however, not yet too late to push for the declaration.

In July 2010 as the Year of the Thomasian?

UST is the oldest university in Asia and the largest Catholic university in the world (the size of student population is one campus). It counts among its alumni four Philippine presidents, six Supreme Court justices, and hundreds—perhaps thousands even—of prominent and outstanding men and women in various fields of endeavor in Consider, too, UST's role in Philippine history. All this should underscore the university's WORK as the university not only a celebration for the Thomasian community but for the entire country as well.

Lest this sound as a bid by present-day Thomasians for self-aggrandizement, the proposal to declare the UST alumnus' idea of honoring the academic community that he was once, to tell, and will always proudly be a part of—the Thomasian family.

President ACSIO, let this be one of your last significant actions before stepping down from the presidency. But here than that, let it be your ultimate tribute to one of the greatest Thomasians who ever lived—your own father, Teodoro Pelayo Sta. Maria.

For your father and the men and women of centuries past who have brought honor to UST by doing their share in the shaping of our nation through their particular expertise or service in the fields of engineering, commerce, education, law, arts and letters, fine arts, nursing, medicine, pharmacy and sciences; for the UST graduates of the recent past who have stood out in their chosen fields and in the fields of entertainment, music, film, business and public service; for the entire Thomasian family of the past four centuries—declare 2010 as Year of the Thomasian! It would be a tribute not only to generations well-served and well-deserved, the perfect gift to the Thomasian community on the eve of their alma mater's 400th year.

—MIGUEL RAYMUNDO MESINA,
Fine Arts Advertising 1967,
2990 PUEA
Bagong Bayan Sweden

Natural calamities and Ash Wednesday

COMMENTARY

By Sid T. Martinez

IN TIMES OF NATURAL CALAMITY, FACTS on the status of Catholics' religiosity to our parish become present to me, in parish priests, like flowers before the sun. As flowers bloom into beauty with the help of the sunlight, religious data peculiar meaning when put under the radiance of reason and the light of Christian faith.

Every time calamity suddenly strikes, like the earthquake that reduced Haiti into rubble, or severe continued, punishment-conveying rain parish churches unusually great numbers.

This religious phenomenon can be interpreted in the light of the study of the many factors that pulled these people to the church. As in a good detective story, a person's motive is reliable tool for proper religious investigation. In this case, the motive for going to church in deadly the horror of the possible consequences of the calamity. This is usually our within the purview of a Christian. So color moved by dread belongs to the realm of natural religiosity which is both instinctive, and guided by reason, and primitive, not yet enlightened by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So, the Haitians, the victims of the shocking supernatural about it. Before the birth of Christianity, natural religiosity was there. Oftentimes, it expresses itself in superstition and fatalism, being put on talismans and primitive, hypnotic rituals in the past centuries mind solely shaped by the fear of the unknown which resulted in a social ism which ignores, albeit violates, the revealed teachings of Christian faith.

When there is something beyond human control, humans, minus help of the light of science and ignorant of the dynamics of nature, would resort to supernatural beings for assistance. This kind of religiosity is as natural as humanity itself. It is neither edifying, nor is it mature. It is not Christian faith anchored on God's promise of eternal life, founded on the joy of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and nourished by the love demonstrated on the cross.

Primitive people, confronted with any terrifying beyond their control, such as danger during childbirth and of death, resorted to rituals to ease their anxiety. Those rituals when handed down to the next generation formed part of those primitive traditions. And if there was someone in the group who could give an explanation that satisfies their primitive mind, then they have a "native or folk priest."

Primitive people, confronted with any terrifying beyond their control, such as danger during childbirth and of death, resorted to rituals to ease their anxiety. Those rituals when handed down to the next generation formed part of those primitive traditions. And if there was someone in the group who could give an explanation that satisfies their primitive mind, then they have a "native or folk priest."

This kind of religiosity is characterized by submissiveness and resignation; its vocabulary does not include foresight and prevention. It is not pro-active. It sometimes seems acted on by anguish and fear and always dictated by external force. It is a form of slavery. Just like what the Israelites suffered in Egypt.

If we look into some political decisions made in our country, there are glaring examples of external forces such as natural disasters shaping our political landscape. One such example is the removal of the 23 military bases which were done out of non-reflective political will. It was due to the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in 1991 which destroyed the infrastructures in the bases and prevented the US government to refurbish its military forces.

The failure to put into policy and implement the provisions of the study of the team of urban development planners in the 1970s which published less-some like Manilens, from being established due to the danger of flood to another 3-hectarian of the lack of political will which resulted in the loss of lives for many during typhoon "Ondoy" This incident reflects the impotence our government exercise to encourage will or lack of it, which is almost always a byproduct of the absence of moral integrity.

Another proof that negates our country's sovereignty will be the presence of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA). It is a ruder reference significance is summarized in one word: help, meaning, we are not in total control of the power and order situation of our land.

In the electoral arena, Senator Aquino is joining the presidential race is another case of external pressure pushing him to run. His decision is simply dictated by the pressure of popular demand due to the euphoria of his mother's passing on. This fact, however, does not discredit his integrity and capacity to oversee country.

When it comes to political life, our nation is like an adolescent whose life is shaped by the environment and other external forces. It is a transition toward adulthood. It is not yet capable of shaping the landscape of its political life. This is the reason why the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) of institutes feels the need to issue a political statement, which is always usual in nature, in times of political crisis, to be of help in the building of our nation-state in quest of political maturity. The process of growth can be facilitated by the Church, but only through it can be a positive factor, but mainly by our responsibility to accept full responsibility for our behavior collectively and individually.

As a conclusion, there is public servants, presidents who confuse the role of their husbands, children, relatives, officemates and employees as the condition of the possibility for their falling into sin. In other words, they sin because of others' faults. Many penitents are not quite convinced that they are responsible for their sins. Oftentimes, the long process necessary to reach conversion is not undertaken for sin.

In the Catholic society every time there is a heinous crime committed, like the massacre in Maguindanao, there is always a suggestion to implement capital punishment. Though against the teaching of the Catholic Church, capital punishment is the result of a system which is dysfunctional and, because still be held accountable irresponsibility in public life is rarely lacking in our society. One of the most important pillars in the teachings of the Catholic Church is freedom upon which responsibility is founded.

In the Old Testament, it was emphasized by Prophet Nathan for the death of Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba. King David took full responsibility for the crime he committed. So hated, were excluded and put ashes on his head as an expression of repentance. Accepting the fact of his sinfulness, David became pleasing to God once again but, according to the Bible, the Spirit of God was on the heart of this repentant sinner.

It is in the spirit of taking full responsibility for our actions individually or collectively that we, Catholics, should welcome the Lenten season by the imposition of ashes on our foreheads, a ritual for adults, symbolizing repentance. It is only in taking full responsibility for where we are now as a people politically, economically and spiritually that an Ash Wednesday celebration makes sense.

Fr. Sid T. Martinez is the chancellor of the Arch diocese of Manila.

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Assistant Editor Tony Burgonia

Cojuangco wants nuke plants in Pangasinan

By Gabriel Cardinoza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LINGAYEN, PANGASINAN—While his proposal to revive the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) is facing rough sailing, Pangasinan Rep. Mark Cojuangco has asked the provincial government to invite the South Korean government to build two nuclear power plants in this province.

But the provincial board has yet to approve a resolution that would open Pangasinan to the construction of the plants.

"We are still going through the process of committee hearings and discussions about the proposed resolution," said Board Member Tyrone Agabas, a member of an ad hoc committee tasked to look into Cojuangco's proposal.

On Feb. 2, Cojuangco wrote the provincial board to ask officials to invite the South Korean government to locate its nuclear power plant project in Pangasinan.

The Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (Kedco), Cojuangco said, has begun disposing its nuclear power plant assets through bidding. Each plant is estimated at $5 billion.

"The Kedco assets were what the international community had agreed on to be set up in North Korea so that it will stop manufacturing nuclear weapons," Cojuangco told reporters here on Monday. He was here to attend the committee hearing on by the provincial board.

"But South Korea continued doing it so the international community asked Kedco to stop building the nuclear power plants there," he said. "So those [assets] are boxed now. They have never been installed."

Power crisis

Seeing them, Cojuangco said he wanted Pangasinan to be the first to invite the South Koreans to locate in the province because of the serious power crisis expected in 2012.

"We will have a 3,000-megawatt (MW) shortfall in the Luzon grid alone in 2012. Even if we build the Bataan Nuclear Power Plants, it will still be not enough," Cojuangco said. The BNPP if operational, can generate 620 MW for each.

Built during the administration of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos, the BNPP was mothballed in 1986 after Marcos' ouster due to safety concerns. The BNPP is blessing, Bataan, was deemed unfitted producing a single watt of electricity but has since generated money and its pay for the Kedco's loans it borrowed to build the plant.

Cojuangco has sponsored a bill in the House of Representatives calling for the rehabilitation of the BNPP. But until the House would not access two months ago, the bill did not even get out of committee.

Cojuangco said the two plants available from Kedco could generate 1,000 MW each.

"So that's only 2,000 MW. We still lack 3,000. And that's only for 2012. How about the succeeding years?" Cojuangco quipped.

He said even if the BNPP will run, the power requirements will still lack 380 MW.

Lower rate

"In my proposal, the province can ask from Kedco a lower power rate for Pangasinan. Based on the province's total power consumption of one billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) in 2009, the province can save about P3.3 billion to P3 billion as the power rate is lowered to P1.50 to P1 per kWh," Cojuangco said.

In addition, he said, the province could ask the national government to declare Bolinao-Anda area a host power free zone.

Cojuangco also said with moderate power plants in the province, there will be more jobs, even in the construction stage alone.

THEIR BAGUIO School children and university students took turns at Burnham Park to illustrate how they want Baguio to turn out, now that it has served a century old. On Feb. 12, the kids presented their ideas at the Baguio Dream Day, hoping to introduce them to aspiring politicians. But few politicians were allowed up to listen to them. —LYNDON BERNARDO/INQUIRER

Kids dream of perfect Baguio City

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—THE ROCK band "The Sirens" believes that dreams were made for children, and candidates in the May 2010 elections should have paid them some attention.

Only a handful of local politicians showed up on Feb. 12 for "Baguio Dream Day."

About 200 elementary high school and university students gathered at the Baguio Convention Center, hoping to discuss with adults their ideas for good governance now that the 2010 campaign season is in full swing.

They came armed with solutions to the city's garbage problem, their positions on privatizing farms from and their ideas about a modern, tech and tolerant Baguio.

About 20 elderly volunteers, police officers and students engaged them in a discussion about their ideas before the students introduced a "vision manifesto for a Baguio beyond 2000," the year Baguio turned 100 years old.

New Baguio look

The children said the Baguio they wanted "is a unique City of Pines that has the forefront of green technologies ... a living map of the arts ... a primary tourist destination, a center of quality education [and] a decongested city with socio-economic status in the evolving metropolitan."

These students love some of their free time last year to help restored city architect Joseph Alabanza picture how they wanted Baguio to look in another 100 years.

Alabanza said the Baguio Community of Volunteers Movement (BCVM) spent eight months of the last year touring campuses to draw insights from the students.

Using crayons and pencils, the school children responded to Alabanza's prompt by drawing what they like or dislike about Baguio.

Burnham Plan

These ideas and drawings form part of a new "Burnham Plan" for the city's centennial by Alabanza and the BCVM, which they are offering to its current city officials, and Fr. Carmelo Carreon, BCVM executive general.

The Burnham Plan of 1905 refers to the urban development plan designed by Chicago architect Daniel Burnham for Baguio. Features of the plan are also evident in Burnham's Manila Plan and to the design of Chicago and Washington, D.C. in the United States.

The Baguio dream day was originally scheduled for December last year, but Alabanza wanted politicians to participate in the exercise and listen because that would help fit in Baguio development in their campaign platforms.

Only three outgoing city officials attended the event, but all of them left the hall in the middle of the program.

Danielle, a high school student of the Saint Louis University, said students like her were not pushing governments officials to ensure "the old Baguio because it has passed."

Disconnect

She said all they want is for politicians to start thinking about a Baguio that would serve them when their children and grandchildren come to age the city's bicentennial in 2059.

Henry Teodoro, president of the Center for Learning and Teaching Styles Inc. Philippines (CLTI), asked the students to discuss their ideas for the adults who participated in the exercise.

School administrator Phil Ian Wiygan said he and professor Rosemarie Bulwag, leader of state rebel group Gumilio Bulwag, were among the people who gave the children all their attention.

A group of grade school students told a police officer that they expected better security as night as residents with late afternoon classes could walk home safely.

Another group told an old woman that its idea of a perfect Baguio is "clear skies, smaller buildings and no vehicles plying the downtown streets."

Some of the old-timers who participated in the exercise said their own ideas coincide for a better Baguio.

Tribal neighbors

Virgilio Bautista, former president of the University of Baguio, advised a group of students never to place for a Baguio that is isolated from the rest of the Ifugao and Kadaclan-ay communities in Benguet.

"The Spaniards were so fond Baguio [when they established the Cordillera before they] even established Trinidad in Benguet. Baguio was created because the Americans wanted to their city here. This is why [the city] must grow alongside Benguet," said Bautista, chair of the Baguio Centennial Commission.

Carreon said politicians, who failed to see the value of the activity, won't miss out.

"We will send them copies of these ideas when they are elected. They have to see what the new generation really wants them to do," he said.

Truck, jeep collide in Cagayan; 13 killed

TUGUEGARAO CITY—AT LEAST 13 people were killed while 14 others were hurt when a truck collided with a jeepney in Piat town in Cagayan on Monday morning, police said.

Chief Insp. Basilio de Lara, Piat police chief, said most of the fatalities died instantly from head injuries.

The truck driver, Joey Salvador, lost control of the steering wheel when one of its tires burst and hit an approaching jeepney along the national highway in Barangay Villa Rey at about 4:30 a.m., De Lara said.

The truck was on its way to a sugar mill in Piat, police said. The wrecked jeepney came from the Nueva Vizcaya and was on its way to this capital.

De Lara, in a telephone interview, said many of the victims' faces were crushed.

All fatalities, who included students, were passengers of the jeepney. They were identified as Princess Bekis, Rizelle Villeros, Edwardo Gaddy, Arnan Cudalita, Fatima Dulloog, Pepe Ayuda, Jody Ibanez, Lindsay Ramirez, Angelie Ramirez, Isabel Cudalita, Randy Cudalita and engineer Faustino and Corazon Alparis.

The injured victims were taken to the Piat Emergency Hospital in Piat town and in the Cagayan Valley Medical Center and St. Paul Hospital here. —*Vincent Cabreza Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Drought losses reach ₱7M

ROSALES CITY—DAMAGE TO rice and corn in Nagtie Occidental caused by drought rose to over P7 million, the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPA) said on Monday.

The report disclosed that the drought has affected 500.29 hectares (ha) of rice fields of land in Mexmaraya City and Hinigaran were among the worst hit, causing more than P7.2 million damage to rice and corn crops.

It said 115.28 ha of rain-fed rice in Hinigaran valued at P1,728,000 were destroyed, while 61 percent of the rain-fed rice planted on 111.31 ha and costing P646,675 were damaged.

In Manila, the drought also damaged 36 ha of corn valued at P1.296 million and half of the rain-fed rice planted on 10 ha costing P1,812,000.

In Cayagan, the 81 NIBs also caused damages to crops, including rice ha of rain-fed rice estimated to cost P58,000 and 51 percent of corn on 80 ha worth P980,128.

Most ha of corn in La Castellana valued at P144,000, and two percent of corn planted on 7 ha in Bag and costing P10,080 were also damaged.

The drought also affected 16 robusta where 25 percent of the corn planted on 103.3 ha and valued at P913,500.

The OPA reported damages to 44 percent of the corn planted on 6 ha in Kabankalan City and valued at P162,000.

It estimated losses in rice, corn and sugar cane due to El Niño to reach P2.16 billion this year, unless the government would implement mitigating measures. *Carlo B Gomez, Inquirer Visayas*

Firearms seized from Masbate village chief

LOGAJO CITY—MEMBERS OF Task Force Masbate arrested a Barangay leader after assault rifles and ammunition were found in his residence in Placer town in Masbate, on Sunday, a police official said.

Armed with a search warrant, the lawmen raided the house of Antonio Tecsangco, chair of Barangay Danao, at around 9:15 p.m. after receiving reports that the firearms were being kept there, said Supt. Elchar Bein, Bicol police spokesperson.

The team, led by Senior Insp. Elmer Dacuan, recovered one M-16 and one M-14 rifles, one 9-mm machine pistol, 76 rounds of 5.56-mm, 19 rounds of 7.62-mm and seven rounds of 9-mm bullets, and 24 empty shells of a .45-cal handgun.

Tecsangco did not seem at first and is now in the custody of the task force.

The Ombudsman has the issue of local officials arrested in Masbate for violating the Commission on Elections gun ban at the onset of the May polls.

Bein said that since the ban took effect, 61 people had been arrested in Bicol, with Masbate having 29 violations: Camarines Sur, 9; Sorsogon, 9; Albay, 7; Camarines Norte, 5; and Naga City, 2.

Checkpoints and raids resulted in the confiscation of 33 firearms, 28 of them handguns.

Acting Defense Secretary Norberto Gonzales, who visited Masbate on Friday, said he would hold Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan officials responsible in the province to persuade them to sign an agreement for fair and violence-free elections.

Gonzales met with the Joint Security Coordinating Council (JSCC) and the task force to check on reports that 2,500 members of political armed groups from Central Luzon and the Visayas were hired by warring political clans in Masbate.

On Jan. 21, the island-province was placed under special police watch until the end of the election period. All but four of the 20 towns have been declared "hot spots" by the Philippine National Police. —*E. Arguelles, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Virgin Mary statue installed in Boracay

ILOILO CITY—SOME 2,000 Catholic devotees and residents of Boracay Island joined a procession and Eucharistic ceremony on Thursday to install a new statue of the Virgin Mary at a landmark rock formation to replace the statue that was removed last week.

They attended Mass at the Holy Rosary Church before proceeding to the shores of Bulabog Beach, one of the three villages of the island, to the Diguyos to a private interview on Friday.

Three boats, including one carrying a 4-foot statue of the Virgin Mary, sailed to the rock formation where the statue was installed. The residents stayed on the shoreline until the statue was blessed by Pinero.

The new statue replaced the one removed upon orders of resort owner Socorro Ramos-Cellino Cruise who had ordered it replaced with a marker engraved with the Ten Commandments. *Nestor B. Burgos Jr., Inquirer Visayas*

NEWSBRIEFS

■ ORMOC CITY

Fire hits warehouse

THOUSANDS of sacks of sugar, corn, rice and fertilizer went up in smoke in a fire that hit a 1,000-square-meter warehouse early Sunday.

SFO1 Fod Mercadas, City fire investigator, said fire, of still unknown cause, started before 5 a.m., destroying two trucks and a building.

One fireman was brought to the hospital after experiencing difficult breathing, while another suffered a slight injury at the left foot after hitting the gate to the warehouse.

Mercadas placed the damage at P1.5 million.

Jhie Kenar-Ros
Inquirer Visayas

■ ALBAY

Unity run for polls

THOUSANDS of people joined a multisectoral morning event dubbed "Unity run for HOPE" on Friday to promote honest and peaceful elections in Albay.

The race kicked off at 6 a.m. at Ligao Sports Dis ct Ligao City for Ligao (main) before proceeding to the Pellacardo Park for the signing of a peace covenant by candidates vying for local posts.

Senior Supt. William Macaraeg, provincial police chief, said the activity was initiated by the Commission on Elections in Albay, Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting, and the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Bishop Joel Baylon of the Diocese of Legazpi witnessed the covenant signing.

Ma A Ayalin
Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ TAGUIGAN CITY

School drug tests

DRUG TEST Most of college students in Eastern Visayas will start this week, according to Lito Baja, regional information officer of the Philippine Drugs Enforcement Agency (PDEA).

The move is part of the government's program to help students hooked on illegal drugs.

So Friday, random testing will be conducted on 10 students from each school and this and of the schedule, Baja said.

Eastern Visayas has more than 130,000 students enrolled in 98 colleges and universities.

Edwin Chua, president of the Regional Association of Higher Educational Institutions, welcomed the drug testing.

Jojo Gabinbo Inquirer Visayas

■ CABANATUAN CITY

LTO chief slain

THE CHIEF of the Land Transportation Office in Baguio City was gunned down by two men on Thursday while she was on her way home from work, police said.

Melissa Garcia, 30, was on a motorcycle in Barangay Pamboan in Gapan when two motorcycle-riding men shot her in the head and back. She died before reaching the hospital.

Garcia, who was on her third year as LTO chief in Gapan but had been with the agency for more than 10 years, had no known enemy, said Marlo Dia Maria, an LTO staff member.

Supt. Ricardo Villanueva, acting Gapan police chief, said Garcia had been receiving death threats.

Gaudencio Pascual
Inquirer Central Luzon

Dinagat officials to appeal SC ruling

SURIGAO CITY—REELING FROM a Supreme Court decision declaring unconstitutional the law separating Dinagat Island from Surigao del Norte, island officials said they did not deserve the verdict and would appeal it in a motion for reconsideration.

"We are not losing hope," Dinagat Gov. Geremdyln Yabo told this Inquirer by phone.

The high tribunal said Dinagat failed to satisfy the land area and the population requirements for the creation of a province. The law requires at least 2,000 square kilometers for a municipality to become a province, but Dinagat has a total of only 802.12 sq km, it noted.

At the same time, the island failed to meet the required population of not less than 250,000. According to the May 2000 census of the National Statistics Office, Dinagat had 106,951 residents.

Dinagat was part of the first district of Surigao del Norte until it became a separate province on Dec. 3, 2006. It is made up of the towns of San Jose, which is the capital, Basilisa, Dinagat, Cagdianao, Libjo, Loreto and Tubajon.

Dinagat is also home to the Philippine Reserve Steel Manufacture Association (PRMA), the religious cult founded by the Echos.

Before Dinagat became an official province, the Catholic Church and the Iglesia Filipina Independiente launched massive campaigns against its ratification.

"The law creating Dinagat province was duly passed in both Houses of Congress and Senate. Our province may be in quiescence of law," Echos said.

The Supreme Court ruling, she said, would spell disaster for the province as it means displacement of government workers, disruption of livelihood, trade and investments.

"Thousand of people will go hungry and lose jobs. I don't think God will allow this. I am confident we can get a favorable ruling," she said.

Vice Gov. Elvis dela Marced said the ruling was a setback for the development of the island-province.

"We are really saddened, but through prayers, we are optimistic we can overcome this legal problem. Inserting our position," Dela Marced said.

Reverting the province to Surigao del Norte as a component town was "structurally impossible" given the administrative, livelihood, infrastructure projects and development which were already in place, he said.

Dela Marced said a "powerful lobby group," which he refused to identify, could be behind the Supreme Court decision.

Froadelin M. Catigtig, Inquirer Mindanao

PINATUBO TOURISM A boatman paddles his way at the crater of Mount Pinatubo as local and foreign tourists continue to flock to the unique lake in Zambales, particularly this summer.

Bettors seek luck in Panlilio-Pineda conflict

By Tonnee Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO— Lottery bettors have seen something bright in the electoral conflict between Gov. Eddie Panlilio and former Board Member Lilia Pineda.

They have been toying to figure out the winning number combinations in the Small Town Lottery (STL) from the decision of the Commission on Elections' Second Division to annul Panlilio in favor of Pineda.

For instance, a bettor in Barangay San Agustin here said he had been playing bets on the pairs "2-11" (Feb. 11 as date of promulgation of the case), "9-11" (2,011 votes in Pineda's lead over Panlilio) and "9-27" (Feb. 27 as Pineda's birthday).

He has also chosen "11" for the 11,000 pages of the decision's parcel with a number of his choice.

STL = 'lucking'?

The STL is a government-run game, but many bettors consider it no different from "jueteng," the illegal number game, which has a similar two-number combination for a bet.

Critics consider the lottery the legal front for jueteng.

Lottery personnel, who man designated betting stations, are also known in communities as the same people or subcollectors of jueteng tied to collect bets for jueteng in neighborhoods.

Getting the right pairs in the STL, however, is more of a challenge, as pairs from 1 to 40 are used. 4,371 bet lumps P500.

Jueteng uses only 1 to 37 for a return of P600 for every peso played.

Dismap, so far

Some bettors are dismayed because the numbers related to Pineda's second case have not been coming out as winning combinations. A cockfighter in the city proper said several of his regular customers have been wagering on more or less the same numbers.

So far, only the number 11 has been coming out, at least thrice in February alone, a review of the comic files of winning numbers pairs discovered.

In the morning draw on Saturday, the winning pair was 11-34.

The San Agustin bettor said he had also picked the number 2 since February is the second month of the year and because it was the Second Division of the Comelec that nonlonized the recount and revision.

"I could see are the patterns," he said in Kapampangan.

In Pampanga, the STL is run by Ocat Corp.-Jueteng Corp. and not by Pineda's husband's unsuccessful jueteng financier Rodolfo "Jong" Pineda, according to records of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

Speculation

The winning pairs on Feb. 11 were "24-5" (incoming draw), "11-22" (afternoon draw) and "26-18" (evening draw). On Feb. 12, draw were "21-11," "17-5" and "8-25."

This kind of speculation happens when bettors try to get a sense of the likely outcome from the game operators' probe. When this happens, bettors stop relying on dreams (studying the patterns of winning numbers) by using the comic or calendar lists (list of winning pairs arranged according to dates).

As in previous years, bettors also see fewer numbers based on their dreams and superstitions. Numbers are assigned to pairs of the body, in case the dream happens to be about one's teeth or eyes.

At times, bettors get their number pairs from the numbers entered by a known personality such as Archbishop Fernando Antonio's readings of the Gospel, the numbers in the license plate of a car of the local gambling lord, or the birthdays of their relatives.

Reinaldo Quiñones, project manager of the STL, whose franchise is owned by the PCSO, says the winning numbers, embed in plastic balls, are drawn through a machine that are also used in lotto draws.

"It's always been drawn mechanically from the start," he said. But Gov. he said, draws the winning pairs in an office in Apalit town, also in Pampanga.

Reports received by the Pampanga Anti-Gambling Council said the prizes operators as payout tables expressed by a gambling financier's in Guagua town.

Get feeling

The San Agustin bettor said he would push his luck because of his "strong feeling" that the numbers will emerge and bring him the much-needed cash.

Lawyer Simo Bellarmine, secretary of Panlilio, said the recount case was both a numbers game and credibility battle.

Panlilio, he said, has more than 4,000 votes because only his nickname "Sarong," were written on the ballots.

His certificate of candidacy in the 2007 election used the nickname "Sarong Ed," said Town Lumbatan, Comelec provincial supervisor.

"There were no other candidates who went by the nickname 'Sarong.' The intention of the voter is most be determined," Bellarmine said in a phone interview.

"Sarong" is in Kapampangan term for master. But Catholics in the province call their priests that name, thus Sarong Ed, Bellarmine said.

In her original COC, Pineda wrote "Baby" on the space for nickname, then in Election Day in 2007, she got a resolution from the Comelec allowing her to use "Nanay Baby," Lumbatan said.

Pineda said she wanted the case go through due process. "I'm not rushing because I already won the votes that I seek," she told the Inquirer.

9-year-old schoolgirl beheaded

By Marlon Cinco
Inquirer Southern Luzon

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—No one deserves to die that way, least of all a 9-year-old schoolgirl.

Marinel Garcia was last seen when she left her school in Barangay Bubin del Norte, Paete, Laguna, on Thursday morning, Senior Insp. Johnmar Velez, Paete police chief, said over the phone.

At around 1 p.m. on Friday, another child discovered the head and the 9-year-old girl's body in a grassy lot in Paete. The rest of her body lay about 50 meters away, police said yesterday.

The girl, a Grade 2 pupil who wore civilian clothes to school, was found half naked, Velez said, citing suspects that she had been raped before she was killed, police said. "We are still waiting for the results of the autopsy to confirm that," Velez said.

Velez said the head had been slightly skinned like "a coconut with the outer skin peeled off."

He said the victim had been stabbed twice—the first pierced her heart, the second her liver—causing her death.

Neighbors said the suspects had already been identified, but gave no further details.

FLORAL FLOATS A flower kingdom or a floral setting for a nighttime? These are among the colorful floats that participated in the floral parade in the main media labor in Bantayan Park as part of the month-long celebration of Bagiuo City's Panagbenga Flower Festival.

Double-header kicks off fresh PBL season today

By Jeanine W. Fajo

AS OF LAGUNA BOMBERS MANILA returns as the sixfold favorite following its surprise championship title in the Philippine Basketball League last season.

Now fortified up by league veteran Eli Asinas, Asinol is the reigning champion after defeating Enrol Reed in the kickoff clash of the PBL PG Hutchison Hancock Cup today.

"They have what it takes to challenge everybody," said Asinol coach Cesar Tan, wary of an Enrol Reed squad featuring seven of UCLA's champion San Sebastian.

"They are hotter from winning, so it's a plus factor there."

Game time at 2 p.m. right after the 20-minute opening ceremonies at the FilOil Flying V Arena in San Juan.

Ricta C. and Gerardo Bias, two of six new teams in the eight-team field, collide in the second game at 4 p.m.

Asinol, led by JR Grella, Arnas Go and Fritz Buenaso, dragged Harbour Centre to a finals decider to last year's Unity Cup before settling for a runner-up finish.

Tan agrees expects the veteran trio to play a key role alongside Asinol, who was acquired from Harbour Centre during the dispersal draft, big men Raymond Aguilar and Mars Cardoz and new recruits James Mangahas and Dino Escobedo.

"I have eight holdovers from last year's team and seven new faces, so we're still trying to fit each one to our basketball system," said Tan. "Hopefully, things will run smoothly in time for the opener."

Harbour Centre and other powerhouses like Hapee and Magnolia decided to skip the season-opening tournament due to various reasons.

But superintendent Chino Trinidad still expects a competitive card, saying that several collegiate standouts will debut in the league.

"There are a lot of exciting players out there, even rookies are expected to make an impression in the coming tournament," said Trinidad.

Officiating under a microscope?

HEART, SOUL, SPORTS

Jimmy Alapide

LAST All-Star Dwyane Wade eyes the basket as he goes up against West's Zach Randolph (left) and Clarence Gilbert.

Wade powers East before record crowd

ARLINGTON, TEXAS—THE LARGEST crowd to watch a basketball game saw an all-too-familiar sight—Dwyane Wade dominating a big game in Texas—as the Eastern Conference beat the West, 141-139, in Sunday's NBA All-Star Game.

Wade had 28 points and won MVP honors in a game watched by 108,713 at Cowboys Stadium.

Chris Bosh made the winning free throws for the East with five seconds left. The West had a chance to win it, but Coumedy Anderson's three-point attempt came up short.

"To be in front of 100,000 fans, that was actually what it was, that was not a false number. If you could look up in the stands, and there was not a seat open," LeBron James said.

The longest game of the night came outside, when Hornets fan favorite Mark Cuban and Cowboys owner Jerry Jones came onto the court to announce the record crowd, which was also the largest in the $1.2 billion building's short history.

They were hosting it the old-school Wade way to the line and made two free throws with 12.7 seconds left. Dirk Nowitzki of the hometown Mavericks tied it with two of his own free seconds later before Bosh put the East on top by One final time.

James had 25 points, and Bosh finished with 24 points and 10 rebounds for the East. For the West, Anthony scored 27 and Howard had 22.

Wade's performance brought back memories of his MVP performance when Miami won the title in Dallas.

"I've had a little luck in Dallas. Of course, 2006 is very, very memorable, something I dreamed of doing for a long time, winning the NBA championship and I was lucky enough and blessed enough to win the MVP there," Wade said.

ICTSI Classic starts at Malarayat

By Manny R. Castillo

ELMER SALVADOR LOOMS AS THE PLAYER to watch when action shedded field tees off today for the first round of the ICTSI Classic at the metropolis Malarayat course in Lipa City.

It was at the rolling, well-manicured course south of Manila where Salvador pulled off his biggest victory to date last December when he bested both Angelo Que and Dutchman Gabriel Van Der Walt to win the Philippine Open.

And it would be interesting to see how Salvador goes up against his peers with a new, post-Open swing saying he needs some more to gain further distance.

"I will stick to this more swing[ ] as master what," the 40-year-old Davao native, last year's Order of Merit winner, told 1000 reporters during the club The Country Club last released late last month where he failed to make the cut in both days.

Salvador will be joined by Que, Van Der Walt, Jhonnel Ababa, Jeff Fresnedi, Jr. Jhe Peter Malicdem, Antonio Lascuña and the veteran Frankie Minoza are expected to grab the limelight.

The P1 million event, put up by ICTSI and hosted by the 360 Gary Gulf Management, Digital Land Mower, Studio 23, Bible TV and Grill Proud, is the first of 12 legs making up this year's Philippine Golf Tour circuit.

SALVADOR

A joke and a nightmare on Valentine's Day

BARE EYE

Ricardo Trinidad

Firefly eyes 3rd win in NCA derby

Santo Tomas, UE bets grab UAAP limelight

Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres
Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

SPORTS

Kings cling to faint hope

Uichico says Ginebra's late Game 3 surge positive sign

By Cedelf P. Tupas

BARANGAY GINEBRA'S FOURTH-QUARTER SPURT THAT FELL SHORT IN Game 3 has given Gin Kings coach Jong Uichico reason to believe they could still deck the odds in their BPC PBA Philippine Cup best-of-seven semifinal series with Alaska.

For Gin Kings, darlings of the Araneta Coliseum crowd, absorbed an 86-91 defeat in Game 3 Sunday night and fell to an 0-3 series hole, a deficit which has never been overcome in league history.

But was the narrowest losing margin for the Gin Kings in the series. They lost 82-90 in Game 2, after getting blown off the court in Game 1, 79-104.

The Gin Kings were just three days removed from their gruelling five-game quarterfinal series against Talk 'N Text when they dismissed the Montana Jose. They also fell 0-2 in the Tropang Texters before pulling through.

Uichico hopes the Gin Kings, who almost overhauled the Aces' 23-point lead in the final eight minutes of Game 3, will finally break through on Wednesday.

"I know the odds are not in our favor," Uichico told the boys yesterday.

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"I know the odds are not in our favor," Uichico told the boys yesterday.

"If we can get a win on Wednesday it will just be 1-2 and I know there's a team that has come back from that deficit."

Injuries to Eric Menk and Cyrus Cortes hurt the Gin Kings in the series.

Without Menk, the Gin Kings have found difficulty against Alaska's big men, particularly Sonny Thoss, who has averaged 13 points and nine rebounds.

Menk remains doubtful for Game 4 after sustaining a groin injury in the opening game of the series. Cone also sprained his right ankle in Game 1.

"We just have to find ways to win," Uichico said.

ABC-man Sarsiga fires gun the whole Alaska Aces organization mutiny. [illegible]

Eman now with Aces; Thoss shines

SEEING THE BENCH FOR MOST OF his PBA career with San Miguel, big man Enrique Ilaisaa is ready to finally show his true worth with Alaska.

Coach Tim Cone said he has big plans for the 6-foot-9 Ilaisaa, the former San Miguel center, where the Aces acquired his free agency Friday.

"We're very excited," Cone said of Ilaisaa, the No. 2 pick in the 2007 draft. "We expect him to play in the triangle [offense] with Sonny [Thoss] like Dan Gozo and Andrew Bynum of the Lakers."

Cone's Aces lead Barangay Ginebra, 3-0, in their best-of-seven semifinal series in the BPC-PBA Philippine Cup.

The 27-year-old Ilaisaa saw limited action in his more than two years with the Beermen, who gave their then-rookie an extra year to develop.

Ilaisaa averaged 3.5 points and 3.5 rebounds in 11.5 minutes per game in 2009 and 2.5 points and 2.5 rebounds in 8.5 minutes per game in 2008.

The former University of Mindanao standout was waived by the Beermen to accommodate returning veteran Danny Ildefonso to their roster, and the Aces pounced at the opportunity to sign the big man.

According to Cone, Alaska will assume the final year of the three-year deal San Miguel gave to Ilaisaa and expected him to be a "multiple starter."

"Enrique just wants to play and have consistent minutes and we're willing to give him that opportunity," Cone said in his account in the social networking site [illegible].

"The whole organization is excited."

The outlook that Enrique can see action for the Aces is in the imminent Fiesta Conference in March since league rules prohibit players out in the lineup at the start of the playoffs from playing.

Meanwhile, Thoss was named BPC Accel 49th Price Corps Player of the Week for leading Alaska to three wins over Ginebra in their semifinal series.

The 6-foot-7 Thoss averaged 15.7 points and 9.0 rebounds against the Gin Kings.

"Sonny has been the difference in our series so far," said Cone. "He's been playing with great confidence."

Thoss fired 21 points and grabbed 11 rebounds in the 104-79 victory in Game 1.

Cedelf P. Tupas

THE CLASH OF TITANS BEGINS!
THE ASEAN BASKETBALL LEAGUE FINALS
PHILIPPINE PATRIOTS vs. SATRIA MUDA BRITAMA (Indonesia)
February 17th :
Philippine Patriots vs. Satria Muda BritAma (Indonesia) @ 8pm
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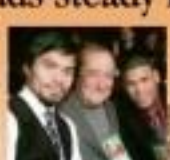
Betting odds steady for Manny

By Ray Lauren

HIT THE HEARTH, LEATHER guy, but as far as Eight Outs are concerned Filipino superstar Manny Pacquiao remains over Ghanian challenger James Cleverly.

Betting odds for the Pacquiao-Cleverly showdown for the World Boxing Organization welter-weight crown on March 13 at the Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas, continued to tilt in favor of the Filipino pound-for-pound king, according to Gamblingo911.com.

With less than four weeks to go before the fight, billed as "The Event," Pacquiao remains over pet Pacquiao as a minus-306 favorite and Cleverly a plus-300 underdog.



PACQUIAO (left) with promoter Bob Arum and fighter Juan Manuel Lopez.

This means that a P306 bet on Pacquiao will earn just P100 if he wins, while a P100 winning bet on Cleverly will net P300.

Sportsbetting.com, on the other hand, put Pacquiao—the only boxer to win seven world titles in as many divisions—at minus-300 and Cleverly at plus-350.

There are little differences in the figures provided by Bookmaker.com which put Pacquiao at minus-440 and Cleverly at plus-350.

The 23-year-old Cleverly however, seems unaffected by the latter respect being accorded him, saying he knows how to handle pressure in his Pacquiao fight.

The Ghanaian said he has been training hard and ready to "shock the world" with an upset victory.

In a recent Ring4 Fan show interview, Cleverly (35-3 with 28 knockouts) said he will throw a lot of stiff jabs to prevent Pacquiao (50-3-2, 36 KOs) from digging in and unleashing his power punches in short range.

So draws with Armenian GM, keeps share of 4th

PLEVEN (BULGARIA) — Mikee Jay Sosa lost his only win with the white pieces but had to settle for a draw with Armenian GM Arman Pashikian in the sixth round of the 2010 Acrofet Open chess tournament Sunday in the Hotel Europa owned by Mayor Krasimir Gunchev.

SO

The 26-year-old Sosa settles for a draw against Armenian GM Arman Pashikian in the sixth round of the 2010 Acrofet Open chess tournament Sunday in the Hotel Europa owned by Mayor Krasimir Gunchev in Pleven, Bulgaria.

The 26-year-old Sosa settles for a draw against Armenian GM Arman Pashikian in the sixth round of the 2010 Acrofet Open chess tournament Sunday in the Hotel Europa owned by Mayor Krasimir Gunchev in Pleven, Bulgaria.

Sosa, seeded 17th with an Elo rating of 2650, complicated matters when he gave up a knight in his 30th move for two pawns. Pashikian, however, forced an exchange of queens in the 36th move to stave the game into a drawish ending with both players having bishops of the same color.

They halved the point in 52 moves.

Sharing fourth to 11th places with the high school senior of St. Francis College-Hanover were defending champion GM Efstratios Grivas of France, German GM Arkadij Naiditsch, Bulgarian GM Ivan Cheparinov, Brazilian GM Giovanni Vescovi, Indian GM Krishnan Sasikiran, Ukranian GM Zahar Efimenko and Armenian GM Gabriel Sargissian.

Ranked as 3.3 points more top seed GM Vladimir Baklan-Lupinov, third seed GM Gennadi Sherbakov, former world championship semifinalist GM Sergei Rublevsky and last year's co-champion GM Aleksandr Motylev.

In the eleventh-round, Sosa will handle black against Timofeev.

But Asia vanquished GM Darwin Laylo continued to struggle. Laylo lost to GM Yuriy Kuzubov of Ukraine, his fifth in six matches.

Roy Luarca

Z Gorres home from US today

2 "THE ORDEAL" GORRES' NIGHTmares are finally over.

After grappling with death on for eight-odd, the gallant boxer is coming home to be reunited with his children and kin in Mandaue City today.

Gorres, accompanied by wife Delchen and ZK Bento Calderon, left McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas Sunday night and will be arriving at the Mactan-Cebu International Airport this morning.

Still confined to a wheelchair, Gorres underwent brain surgery on Nov. 13 after he fell unconscious minutes after being declared winner in a bout with Colombian Luis Melendez in Las Vegas.

According to a Philboxing report, fund-raising activities, including one by pound-for-pound king Manny Pacquiao, have been initiated in the Visayas basin and the Philippines to help Gorres recover fully.

Ray Luarca

Arcilla barges into Marawi Open finals

TOP SEED JOHNNY ARCILLA WAVlaid Bernard Jones, 6-2, 6-2, yesterday to reach the finals of the Marawi City Open Tennis championship in the Mindanao State University court.

Arcilla, chasing his third title in three months, will take on either Illaro Amanta and Rolando Real in the finals. Heavy rains forced the postponement of the Amanta-Real semifinal duel.

It was a double victory for the 29-year-old Arcilla who partnered with Amanta in beating Arvin Elmos and Gus Ismara, 6-4, 6-2, to advance to the doubles quarterfinals.

Also making the next round were Nilo Alimento and Jones, Rolando Real and Jesus Buenaventura and Adolfo Abadia and Mario Sabas.

Mayor Sultan Sahal Sala donated P100,000 and issued trip tickets for the top eight players in the first stop of the nationwide circuit organized by the United Tennis Players of the Philippines.

The event is part of Arcilla's preparation for the country's Davis Cup tie against Japan in Osaka in March.

The singles champion will win P25,000, the runner-up P15,000 and third placer P7,500. The doubles champ pins get P15,000.

George Guanzo, Contributor

Aplus METRO
Gino Abelardo S. Ulanday

DID YOU KNOW

MANOLO LPONG City was named San Nicolas Bari by the Spaniards in the 1600s, in honor of the patron saint of Roma.
Cyril L. Arambulo, Inquirer Research

Teenager sues school for neglect

Ex-student says exposure to toxin during class experiment has left him ill

By Miko Morales and Stephanie R. Asuncion

FOUR YEARS AFTER HIS EXPOSURE TO A DANgerous chemical during a class science experiment, a former student of St. Andrew's School in Parañaque City yesterday sued his teacher and school officials for negligence.

Atty. Ruth Cecilia, who was a 14-year-old freshman when a beaker of mercury was accidentally spilled by students inside a classroom on Feb. 18, 2006, filed a civil case against school officials and Gloria Mercado, a science teacher, at the Las Piñas Regional Trial Court.

Rafael Gutierrez, who is one of the lawyers representing the complainant, said that Cecilia was seeking more than P6 million in damages.

Gutierrez told the Inquirer in a phone interview that Cecilia, based on medical tests, is suffering from nerve damage as a result of his exposure to mercury nearly four years ago.

High-grade fever, tremors

"He has symptoms which are similar to Parkinson's disease. He regularly suffers from high-grade fever which causes the onset of tremors," the lawyer said.

"He just turned 18, he's in first year college student who's trying to function as normally as he can but he has been missing a lot of his classes due to his conditions," he added.

Cecilia, according to Gutierrez, "cannot go out a lot or engage in a lot of sports. His immune system has been greatly compromised so when he gets a high-grade fever, the tremors start and it takes a while for him to recover."

"It's for life, it's not a problem that will go away," the lawyer said as he explained that mercury is a neurotoxin which attacks the brain and nervous system.

"Since there is no chance of regeneration, his symptoms are irreversible, permanent and incurable," he added.

Cecilia was one of the 13 St. Andrew's students who were confined at the Philippine General Hospital a few days after the class experiment when they developed rashes, a symptom of mercury exposure.

For close monitoring

Gutierrez said Cecilia was among the cases whom doctors had recommended for close monitoring.

"Their negligence robbed my son of a normal childhood," his mother, Asher, said in a statement.

"We are filing the case because we want to hold the school responsible for (Cecilia's condition)," Gutierrez said.

He pointed out that it took days before St. Andrew's officials took action after the mercury spillage incident occurred.

"It happened on a Thursday and the school remained open and it was only the following week that the school acted on the matter when health officials intervened," he said, pointing out that the school's lack of emergency response showed negligence on the part of its officials.

Gutierrez also pointed out that Cecilia's teacher, with her 28 years of experience, should have known that it was unhealthy to expose children to a dangerous chemical.

"Mercury causes children, pregnant women and the fetus. She should have known that it would cause children ill. She only advised the children to wash their hands after touching the chemical. If she knew what she was doing, she wouldn't have taken it out in the classroom," he said.

Through inhalation

He explained that contamination to mercury is not through contact with the chemical but through inhalation.

At the same time, Gutierrez, who is also the executive director of Ban Toxics!, a nongovernment organization advocating a

TEENAGER, A-8

BACK TO NORMAL
With the demand for floral bouquets down a day after Valentine's Day, prices of flowers selling in Dangwa, Manila, have also gone back to normal. NOEL ATIENZA

Mandaluyong mayoral bet arraigned on drug charges

By DJ Yap

MANDALUYONG MAYORAL candidate Ernesto Albert Bunn yesterday pleaded not guilty to charges that he tried to sell cocaine to undercover agents of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) in a sting operation in Pasig City last month.

Wearing a green PDEA detainee shirt, a handcuffed Bunn looked calm during his arraignment before Judge Abraham Borreros of the Pasig Regional Trial Court Branch 264.

Bunn is accused of violating Sections 5 and 11 of Republic Act 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act, a nonbailable case.

On Feb. 10, his lawyer, Benjamin Lucada III, filed a petition for bail, citing the weak evidence against his client. This prompted the court to set hearings for the presentation of evidence by the prosecution to justify the accused's continued detention.

The prosecution will start presenting its witnesses on Feb. 19 to prove that there is sufficient basis to believe that the accused is guilty of the offense, and thus should remain under police custody.

"It's natural for the defense to file a petition for bail on the ground that the evidence is weak but the position of the PDEA that our evidence is very strong," said Alfonso Lasaca, PDEA counsel.

Among the PDEA witnesses to be presented are the agent who served as a poseur-buyer, the chemist who analyzed the confiscated substance and the arresting officer.

On Jan. 28, Bunn was arrested for allegedly trying to sell plastic sachets of a white crystalline substance, which later tested positive for cocaine, to undercover PDEA agents in a fast food restaurant.

Before he entered the courtroom, Bunn was wearing a ball cap and had a notebook wrapped around his wrists, as though to hide the handcuffs.

During the hearing, his lawyer asked the court that media be barred from the proceedings—a public hearing—noting that Bunn is a "notable" figure but the judge did not grant the request. The lawyer later refused to be interviewed.

Bunn is running under the Aksyon Demokratiko party against incumbent Mayor Benjie Abalos and two other candidates. His camp has denied that he is engaged in the drug trade and suggested that it could just be a "setup" by his political opponents.

Mayor orders ban on demolition operations in QC

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE QUEZON CITY GOVERNment has imposed a ban on scheduled demolition operations within the city until after May.

In a one-page memorandum, Mayor Bolitoman Belmonte Jr. said the suspension was aimed at preventing any misunderstanding among candidates that might arise due to the heightened political atmosphere.

Misinterpretation

"To avoid any misinterpretation that demolitions are being used to benefit or to cause damage to any political party or candidates, both local and national, it is hereby ordered that demolition orders issued but not yet implemented are hereby suspended until after the election period," Belmonte said.

Exemption

But at the same time, he clarified that projects of the city government and the Department of Public Works and Highways which require the tearing down of illegal structures were exempted from the moratorium.

Agencies already informed

The order was disseminated to concerned departments at the Quezon City Hall on Feb 10.

Belmonte is serving his last term as city mayor.

He is running for congressman in the city's fourth district in the May elections.

"WINNING YOUR BIR TAX AUDIT" SEMINAR
Feb. 20, 2010, 1-5 p.m. Richelle Hotel, 288 EDSA, Mandaluyong City. Topics: Know the BIR tax audit processes, your rights/remedies. Learn techniques & tips in handling tax assessments. Speaker: Atty. Jose Mario C. Buñag, a Tax Expert and Practitioner with post-graduate courses in taxation and law. Served as BIR Commissioner from 2005-2007. Expert in handling BIR cases. Founding & Managing Partner of Buñag & Uy Law Offices. Call Trillium Knowledge Center Publishing at 331-4298, 331-0084; CP: 0919-2286777; 0916-2286780; or Email trillium@skyinet.net or txu_phil@yahoo.com
LIMITED SEATS ONLY! REGISTER NOW!

LOVE IS IN THE AIR
Couples dressed in their wedding finery walk towards a stage where they, along with other couples, will renew their vows. More than 1,000 couples took part in a mass wedding at Cubacub City which was officiated by Mayor Enrico Echiverri.

A stupid and cowardly excuse

ON TARGET
Antonio Tujo

STUPID AND COWARDLY

Those subjective lines describe the excuse given by the armed forces of the Philippines for failing to present in court 43 health workers it arrested earlier on suspicion of being communist rebels.

Senator Defensor Santiago (Albert Teodoro, the administration's candidate for president, described the military's alibi as "inexcusable."

What was the military's excuse for not presenting the health workers before the Court of Appeals on orders of the Supreme Court?

That the convoy that would bring the detainees to the appellate court in Manila from Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal, could not get through the blue People's Army (NPA).

My god, with all the resources at its command—including helicopter gunships and thousands of warm bodies—the AFP is unable to patrol a single band of NPA guerrillas?

If the AFP can only pretend it still fears internal enemies, how can you expect it to protect the country from potential external enemies or foreign aggressors?

* * *

It was not a case of "cannot present in court" but rather "will not present in court" the 43 detainees who were the subject of a writ of habeas corpus.

There's a whale of a difference between "cannot" and "will not."

"Cannot" implies there are circumstances beyond the control of the military that prevented them from bringing their detainees to court.

"Will not" is outspoken defiance of the court order.

The military is still suffering from a martial law hangover.

The military thinks that civilian authorities, including the courts, are subordinate to it.

And why does the military still have that kind of thinking long after martial law is gone?

Because President Gloria owes her position to the AFP that placed her in Malacañang and continues to prop her up.

* * *

If Bonifacio leader Mike Velarde is supporting the candidacy of Manny Villar.

That's not surprising since Villar is fast catching up on Nayong Pilipino in the moneyed and might win in the presidential contest.

Velarde is a superior or one who lords over the new aristocracy.

And when Villar wins, the charismatic religious leader will surely enjoy the perks and privileges he enjoyed during President Erap's tenure.

Velarde supported Erap's candidacy unlike his ex-against Joseph de Venecia in 1998 because Erap was the sure winner.

And when Erap won, Velarde was amply rewarded for his effort.

Velarde's real estate firm, Aimed Realty, gained hundreds of millions of pesos in a very controversial deal with the government.

Aimed sold to the government Velarde's property in Pasay City for P1.222 billion, according to former Solicitor General Frank Chavez.

Velarde, Chavez said, sold his land to the government at P15,220 per square meter when its real value was only P4,320 per square meter!

Will there be a repeat performance by Velarde with the government if Villar wins?

Robbers killed in shoot-out with cops

By Mike Calleja

TWO ROBBERS WERE KILLED on Sunday night in Makati City after they engaged policemen in a brief firefight.

Police investigator PO3 Jason Isreel said the two were remains unidentified at press time.

According to David, at around 11 p.m. on Sunday, members of the Makati police's anti-car theft unit spotted three men driving Reggie Anthal of his money and cell phone at the corner of South Superhighway and Cojuangco Street in Barangay Bangkal, Makati City.

The robbers were backed up by several others in a white Toyota Sedan which apparently served as the group's getaway vehicle.

When they spotted the police, the robbers opened fire, prompting the lawmen to fire back, David said.

One of the robbers was killed on the spot while another was rushed to a nearby hospital due to multiple gunshot wounds. However, he died before he could receive treatment.

Meanwhile, their companions in the white Sedan immediately escaped.

David said the Makati police were conducting follow-up operations to track down the rubber outlaws.

Valenzuela's 'Ondoy' victims to finally get new homes

METROBRIEFS

Fire hits motel on Valentine's Day

FIRE BROKE out at Manila's oldest motel early last Valentine's Day after a fire broke out in its shoreline area on Sunday night, forcing the management to evacuate some of the couples checked in, fire authorities said. No casualties, no one more than 1. The fire started at about 9:15 p.m. in the maintenance post storeroom on the ground floor of Bermuda Motel on Pedro Gil cor. Taft Avenue in the Ermita-Malate Highway, said SO1 Eugene Tagudina, arson investigator. Fortunately, the rooms adjacent to the storeroom were unoccupied. Thus, no one was affected by the smoke that seeped through, the investigator said. Even so, the management decided to evacuate a number of hotel guests on that floor as a precaution. "The rooms in the portion of the motel were not occupied, but some of the guests were evacuated for security reasons," Tagudina said. Some motel personnel equipment and supplies were destroyed by the fire of still unknown origin, he added. Damage was placed at P50,000 while the fire was put out at about 10 p.m.

BJ Pia

Trader loses valuables to thieves

AN INDIAN businessman lost more than P 600,000 worth of cash and valuables, including laptops and cell phone, to armed robbers who ransacked his garage in Marikina City while no one was home on Sunday night, the police said. Mukesh Singh Bhisani, 46, and his family members were robbed of a laptop computer worth P 90,000, a Nokia phone, an iPod music player, a Playstation portable, necklaces worth P 60,000, three bags, and P 120,000 in cash by the three unidentified suspects. Senior Supt. Romeo Magsaysay, Marikina police chief, said the robbery occurred in the incident which occurred at 9:00 p.m. at Bhisanis' residence on Gloucester Street, Bloomridge Heights in Barangay Tumana. "There are only a few houses in that subdivision," Magsaysay said. Bhisani, along with his children Princess Singh Hasan, 23, and Harikesan Singh Hasan, 17, and housemaid Nanabella Dacanay, had just returned from Eid Mubarak celebration on a Tricycle Tuesday with Pilita Sy, who lived on the garage when the robbers accosted them, the police said. One of them pointed a gun at an unknown caliber at Bhisani and ordered him and his co-victims to go inside their house. Inside, they were made to sit on the floor, and took the three bags containing the cash and valuables, the investigation showed. The thieves then used the family's car as their getaway vehicle and exited through the guards' entrance. Magsaysay said he has ordered a composite team to the suspects.

BJ Pia

Young man nabbed for killing best friend

A young man was arrested on Sunday night after he allegedly stabbed dead his best friend in the middle of a drunken argument. Police identified the victim as Rolando Dado, 19. His attacker, Vincent Galig, 18, was arrested at his house in Mahaba Compound, Barangay Bahay Toro, Quezon City. Case investigator PO1 Ronnel Gregorio Cagbil of the Quezon City Police District's Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit said Galig was nagged by several witnesses as the one who stabbed Dado. Dado died before he could receive treatment for a stab wound to the neck at the East Avenue Medical Center. Police learned from the two young men's friends and families that the two were best friends and would at times even share their personal belongings with each other.

Jaime M. Jurado

By Beverly T. Hernandez

SOME 1,000 families in Valenzuela City who lost their homes when Tropical Storm "Ondoy" struck Metro Manila last year will soon be relocated to a new housing facility which will be built by the local government.

The housing project, consisting of several medium-rise buildings that will rise in Barangay Ugong, will be built using funds donated by Valenzuela businessmen.

The project's beneficiaries will be families relocated to Barangay Tullahan River that were displaced when flood spawned by Ondoy swept their houses away.

Last week, Valenzuela Mayor Rhenvin Carabuena led the groundbreaking rites. Work on the housing project is expected to start soon.

The city government provided the 3.9-hectare relocation site which will be called Onda-pilnia (Ondoy-Philippines) Village.

The housing facility will have a multi-purpose covered court, a daycare center, health center and a livelihood training center.

Funding for the project came from 34 local businesses which was assisted through Dahilang Hawing Foundation Inc.

The city government said in a statement that construction of the new housing facility will be extended after the Carnival kicks in to bring prospects who's beneficiary families would be involved in the construction of their own homes.

Manila police conducting hunt for man accused of killing his neighbors

By Jasmenne I. Andrade

POLICEMEN HAVE STARTED looking for a 45-year-old man who allegedly shot to death two of his neighbors on Valentine's Day in Manila.

Homicide operatives of the Manila Police District said they were conducting follow-up operations to locate Tomas Gutierrez, a resident of Vitas Basement on Vitas Street, Tondo, who escaped after he killed his 40-year-old neighbor, Jose Legaspi.

Legaspi was killed instantly after he sustained several gunshot wounds while another neighbor, Pedrito Leganilo, 53, was declared dead on arrival by attending doctors at the Tondo Medical Center.

Leganilo was trying to pacify Gutierrez when the latter turned on him and shot him, cops said.

Case investigator SPO3 Danilo Vidad said the shooting took place at around 3 p.m. on Sunday on Vitas Street, Tondo.

Vidad said that before the victims, Gonzales and Gayoba—who had long been at odds with each other—met by accident on the road. Gonzales immediately took out a gun and shot Gayoba who died.

When he caught up with Gayoba, Gonzales shot him. Leganilo, who rushed upon the scene, tried to stop Gonzales but he was also shot.

The police said that the bad blood between the two men started when Gonzales, who used to be a barangay official, filed a complaint over a still unknown reason against Gayoba.

This led to Gayoba's detention and when he was released, he had a heated argument with Gonzales.

KEEPING WATCH
A mother cradles her child as she watches over her other children at a playground in Bauan Compound in Tondo, Manila.

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education - Caraga Region
Butuan City

INVITATION TO BID

1. The Department of Education, thru the Local School Board Chairman, invites sealed bids for the construction of One (1) Unit Kindergarten Classroom with Toilet and Water System at Sta. Cruz Elementary School, Sta. Cruz, Butuan City with an Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) of Two Million Three Hundred Thousand Pesos (₱2,300,000.00).
2. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary "pass/fail" criterion as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act.
3. Bidders should have completed, within the last five (5) years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project. The description of an equivalent contract is stated in the Bidding Documents.
4. Prospective bidders may obtain further information from the Local School Board Chairman and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below during office hours.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of Two Thousand Pesos (₱2,000.00). The method of payment shall be in cash or cashier's/manager's check. The Bidding Documents shall be available upon receipt by the prospective bidder of the cashier's/manager's check.
6. The Department of Education, Division of Butuan City, through the Local School Board Chairman, will receive sealed bids from prospective bidders on or before 10:00 a.m. on March 6, 2012. Late bids shall not be accepted. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
7. The Department of Education, Division of Butuan City, reserves the right to reject any bid, to declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award in accordance with Section 41 of RA 9184 and its IRR, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) ROBERT D. SOLOMON
Chairman, Local School Board

BAC - February 14, 2012

Errant US rockets slam into Afghan home, kill 12

A US SOLDIER rests as fires as others run for cover during a fire fight with insurgents in the Babaji Qalp area, West of Lashkar Gah in Helmand province, Afghanistan on Feb. 14. AP

MARJAH, AFGHANISTAN—TWO US rockets slammed into a home outside the southern Taliban stronghold of Marjah, killing 12 civilians after Afghanistan's president appealed to Nato to take care in its campaign to seize the town.

Inside Marjah, Marines encountered "death at every corner" on Sunday, their second day of a massive offensive to wrest the district mud-brick city filled with booby traps, hard-core Taliban fighters and civilians unsure when to cast their loyalty.

Marines confronted a fierce sandstorm as they doubled in and out of doorways and hid behind bullet-riddled walls to evade sniper fire. In the north, US Army troops fought skirmishes with Taliban fighters, calling in a Cobra attack helicopter against the insurgents.

Insurgents littered the area with booby traps and explosives before the offensive, and the spread of corrosive, detonation-cord bombs in every home—punctuated the day along with mortars and rocket fire.

"Our children are very scared by the explosions. When will it end?" asked Zohra, a 25-year-old poppy farmer who like many Afghans goes by one name.

The civilian deaths were a blow to Nato and Afghan efforts to win the support of residents in the Marjah area, a major goal of the biggest ground offensive of the eight-year war. Marjah, which had a population of 80,000 before the offensive, is a Taliban logistical center and a haven for their lucrative opium trade which finances the insurgency.

The rockets were fired by a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS, at insurgents who attacked US and Afghan forces, wounding one American and one Afghan, Nato said in a statement. Instead, the projectiles entered 500 meters of target and blasted a home in the Hesa Awal district, which includes Marjah.

The top Nato commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, apologized to President Hamid Karzai for "this tragic loss of life" and suspended use of the sophisticated HIMARS system pending "a thorough review of this incident."

Before the offensive began on Saturday, Karzai pleaded for the Afghan and foreign commanders to be "seriously careful for the safety of civilians."

Karzai's spokesperson Waheed Omar told the president "is very upset about what happened" and had been "very seriously convening his meetings" of ministers "again and again."

Allied officials have reported two coalition deaths so far—one American and one British, who were both killed Saturday. Afghan officials said at least 27 insurgents have been killed in the offensive.

In unrelated incidents in southern Afghanistan, Nato said two service members died on Sunday—one from small-arms fire and the other from a road side bomb explosion. The international force did not disclose their nationalities, but the British defense ministry reported that a British soldier died on Sunday—8 seconds suffered in an explosion.

Marines and Afghan forces met only scattered resistance when they swooped down by helicopter on the impoverished farming community Saturday morning. A day later, however, Taliban attacks were escalating, with small bands of fighters firing rifles and rocket-propelled grenades at troops moving slowly through the bombs and booby-trapped hobbies in homes, residential compounds and along the watered orchards.

"It seems these guys want to get a big show," Lt. Col. Quist said as bullets whizzed overhead.

Brig. Gen. Larry Nicholson, a top Marine commander in the south, predicted it could take 30 days to clear Marjah because of all the bad ideas explosives.

Marines said they would have preferred a straight-up fight to what they called the "death at every corner" stand they faced as they made their way through the town.

"Basically if you have the bombs, it's good. It means you're still alive after the thing goes off," said Lance Corp. Justin Holmes, 22, of Lakeland, Florida.

To bypass heavily mined bridges, Marine engineers erected their own Vietnam-era naval spans over canals that irrigate opium poppy fields. AP

Australia jails 5 jihad attack plotters

SYDNEY—FIVE MUSLIMS WHO plotted an attack using guns and explosives to protest against Australia's part in the "war on terror" were jailed for up to 28 years on Monday after the country's longest extremism trial.

The men, who cannot be named, were convicted in October for plotting firearms, chemicals and bomb-making instructions, along with a stash of Islamist propaganda, for the attack on an undisclosed target.

Justice Anthony Whealy, who handed down the sentences at a purpose-built courthouse in Sydney's west, said the plans were "crime lacking in elsewhere" but were well-advanced when the five were arrested in 2005.

"There is no reason to doubt that, absent the intervention of the authorities, the plan might well have come to fruition in early 2006 or thereabouts," Whealy told the hearing of New South Wales Supreme Court.

The men from Sydney, who are Australian citizens of Lebanese, Libyan and Bangladeshi descent, were handed maximum terms of 23 to 28 years, with the shortest non-parole period being 17 years and three months.

The five, aged 25 to 44, showed little emotion and none of them nodded at each other when Whealy left court.

"That's a very big sentence—not even murderers get sentenced that much," the state of one of the men told reporters.

The judge had said there was overwhelming evidence they wanted to create "at the very least, serious damage to property" and posed a "serious risk" to the public, although it was not clear that they intended to kill.

Australia's former conservative government was closely aligned to the policies of the US president George W. Bush, and the country was one of the first to commit troops to the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The five took Australia's involvement in those conflicts as "acts of aggression against the entire Muslim community," prosecutor Richard Maidment told the court earlier.

They spent months collecting chemicals, firearms and ammunition, and took on their homes a book titled "Sniper training in three" which supported indiscriminate killing, mass murder and martyrdom in pursuit of violent jihad."

The men had pictures and videos showing the hijacked aircraft smashing into the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001, as well as beheadings and death in the battlefield, Maidment said.

They also had documents glorifying al-Qaida chief Osama bin Laden and discussing how to make a pipe bomb with common ingredients such as drain acid and hair bleach, he said. AFP

Israeli harem leader charged with rape, incest

JERUSALEM—AN ISRAELI man who kept a cult-like harem of women and tortured dozens of children with whom he was charged in a 34-count list of charges with enslavement, rape, incest and other sexual offenses.

The 25-page indictment accused 60-year-old Gael Ratzon of carving himself up as a "god-like" figure who preyed on troubled women while trashing them like "shards."

The case has captivated the Israeli public since Ratzon's arrest last month. Several of the women have come forward with details of their harrowing ordeals, describing their attacker's desire to train with flowing, long white hair.

Ratzon, who remains behind bars, has denied any wrongdoing and said the women joined him voluntarily.

According to the indictment, Ratzon kept at least 21 women, who he forced to spend all of their time in a state of near-total obedience in crowded apartments in the Tel Aviv area, taking their welfare checks and making them take bank loans which he then confiscated.

RATZON

Ratzon created an "image of an omnipotent man who was blessed with supernatural powers and the ability to heal, destroy and cure curses," the indictment said.

Some of the women have said they found him irresistible, and said in recent interviews that he connected with them spiritually.

Many of the women inflicted images of the choking hypocrites, died Ratzon with his flowing white hair on their bodies. Others tattooed his name on their cards and arms. They gave the children they bore with Ratzon versions of his first name: Gael, which means "savior" in Hebrew.

Ratzon was arrested last month but wasn't formally charged until on Tuesday. AP

BIDEN

CHENEY

2 vice presidents, 3 programs, little agreement

WASHINGTON—VICE PRESIDENT Joe Biden and former Vice President Dick Cheney engaged in the latest round of their war of words on Sunday in dueling television appearances, which each offered sharply different positions on national security and harmful defenses of their administrations' policies.

Biden said some of the Obama administration officials that have been criticized by Cheney were similar to decisions made during Bush's administration.

"That's Dick Cheney," Biden said on Face the Nation on CBS. "Thank God the last administration didn't listen to him at the end."

Cheney, on This Week on ABC, criticized the Obama administration's handling of the attempted bombing of a jetliner in December, saying, "It is time once again that President Obama is trying to pretend that we are not at war." He said "enhanced interrogation techniques," including waterboarding, should have been an option when questioning the suspect. Read Barack Abdulmutallab.

The back-and-forth between Biden and Cheney highlighted the dueling visions of their administrations, particularly on national security, as well as efforts by conservatives to portray Obama as weak on that issue.

Cheney also distanced himself from Sarah Palin, the former Alaska governor, who suggested a week ago that Obama could help himself politically if he declared war on Iran. "I don't think a president can make a judgment like that on the basis of politics," Cheney said.

Cheney also said the time had come to reconsider the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy which prohibits openly gay men and lesbians from serving in the military. "My guess is the policy will be changed," Cheney said.

The televised appearances occurred in a quintessential Washington fashion: On successive Sunday television programs, which allowed each man to hear what the other had said and then respond.

Biden went first, on Meet the Press on NBC, which was recorded on Saturday in Vancouver, British Columbia, the site of the Winter Olympics. That allowed Cheney to view Biden's appearance on Sunday morning and then respond to it on ABC for Biden got the last word, appearing on CBS and responding to what Cheney had said on ABC. JOT

Dick Francis, thriller writer, ex-jockey; 89

LONDON—DICK FRANCIS, THE best-selling British thriller writer and former champion jockey, has died in his home in the Cayman Islands. He was 89.

A successful steeplechase jockey Francis turned to writing after he retired from riding in 1957. He penned 42 novels, many of which featured racing as a theme. His books were translated into more than 20 languages, and in 2000, Queen Elizabeth II—whose mother was among his many readers—honored Francis by making him a commander of the British Empire.

His son Felix said he and his brother, Merrick, were "devastated" by their father's death on Sunday, but "rejoice in having been the sons of such an enormous man."

"We share in the joy that he brought to so many—not only a long life," Felix said in a statement. Francis' spokesperson Ruth Cairns said the writer had died from natural causes, but did not elaborate.

During his writing career, Francis won three Edgar Allan Poe awards given by The Mystery Writers of America for his novels "Forfeit" (1969), "Nerve" (1971) and "Come to Grief" (1995).

He also was awarded a Gutter Diamond Dagger from the Crime Writers' Association for his outstanding contribution to the genre. The association made him a Grand Master in 1996 for a lifetime's achievement.

Aside from novels, Francis also authored a volume of short stories, as well as a biography of British jockey Lester Piggott.

In recent years Francis wrote novels jointly with son Felix, including "Killer" (2008) and "Even Money" (2009). A new novel by the two, "Crossfire," will be published later this year.

"It is an honor for me to be able to continue his remarkable legacy through the new novels," Felix said in his statement.

Richard Francis was born Oct. 31, 1920 in the youngest son of a horse breeder in Tenby, South Wales. During World War II, he joined the Royal Air Force in 1940 and was stationed in the Egyptian desert before being commissioned as a bomber pilot in 1943, flying Spitfires, Mustangs and Lancasters.

A few years later he returned to his father's stables and became a steeplechase trainer's assistant. Later, as a professional jockey, he won 345 of the more than 2,300 races he rode in between 1948 and 1957, taking the title of Champion Jockey in the 1953-54 season. AP

FRANCIS

SF Bay Area gets ready to plug in electric cars

SAN FRANCISCO—IF ELECtric cars have any future in the United States, this may be the city where they arrive first.

Here, a network of charging outlets will soon be revised to require that new structures be wired for car chargers, across the street from the city hall, some drivers are already plugging unwanted hybrids into a row of charging stations.

In nearby Silicon Valley, companies are developing workplace charging stations in the belief that their employees will be first in line when electric cars begin arriving in showrooms. And at the headquarters of Pacific Gas and Electric, utility executives are preparing "fleet ready" of neighborhoods that they say may soon have a charging outlet in their maintenance for electric cars.

The first wave of electric cars may be expected to begin around December, when Nissan introduces the Leaf, a five-passenger sports car that will have a range of 100 miles on a fully charged battery and be priced for middle-class families.

Several thousand Leafs made in Japan will be delivered to metropolitan areas in California, Arizona, Washington state, Oregon and Tennessee, around the same time, General Motors will introduce the Chevrolet Volt, a vehicle able to go 40 miles on electricity before its small gasoline engine kicks in.

"This is a historic moment for our industry," said Carlos Ghosn, Nissan's president and chief executive. He predicted that by 2020, 10 percent of cars sold would be electric vehicles.

Utilities are gearing up to cooperate with the automakers, a feat that is considered perhaps the greatest in the First Coast are having trouble on the coming issue. Price and tax incentives and vehicle overhaul out. Locations must be found for charging stations. And local electrical grids may need reinforcement.

It is estimated that a typical electric car battery would run the automaker $12,000, and a 240-volt charging unit would cost a household at least $1,500.

Without huge subsidies, "the reality is, these electric vehicles are not going to sweep the industry," said Jim Harris, a senior chair of the market for a very long time," Spending said.

Despite such skepticism, Washington is putting considerable money into the effort, including billions of dollars in loans to Ford, Nissan and Tesla Motors. AFP

The WORLD

Editor Lorraine B. Queco

THE HEAD of the Irish Bishops Conference, Cardinal Sean Brady (center), leads a Mass in St. Patrick's church in Rome on Feb. 14. AFP/VINCENZO PINTO

Pope to meet Irish bishops over child abuse scandal

VATICAN CITY—BISHOPS WHO will meet Pope Benedict XVI a pedophile scandal that has shaken devoutly Catholic Ireland will acknowledge the "enormous injustice and cruelty" inflicted on the victims, a participant said on Sunday.

The Monday and Tuesday meetings, the first of their kind at the Vatican in eight years, will discuss a plan for action and could lead to more penitent resigning in a challenge to the Irish Church like today Pope have already quit.

Benedict, 24 Irish bishops and top Vatican officials will hold three sessions in response to outrage in Ireland over the Murphy Commission Report, a damning indictment of child sex abuse by priests in the country.

"This is not just a romantic exercise," one of the prelates, Bishop Joseph Duffy of Clogher, said on Sunday.

The bishops would acknowledge "the failure on the part of all of us" to be vigilant against abuse and express their commitment to try to rectify "the enormous injustice and cruelty" that victims have suffered, he said.

The Vatican said in December that the Pope will write to the Irish people about the crisis—the first time a Pope will have directed a document solely to the clergy's abuse of children.

"We're asking for Pope Benedict to restore the honor to Ireland which was so severely damaged by these scandals," said John Kelly, founder of Irish Survivors of Child Abuse.

The report, published in November, said the Church in Ireland had "tenaciously" hidden child abuse in the Dublin archdiocese from 1975 to 2004, and operated a policy of "don't tell...don't tell."

It said all Dublin bishops in charge during the period understandably had been aware of some complaints, but the archdiocese had been more preoccupied with protecting the reputations of the Church than safeguarding children.

Four bishops have offered their resignations and the Pope met on his own to interpret one of them, Thomas Gray in Fosa called on other bishops throughout Ireland who resigned in risk "culture of cover-up" to step down.

But in Rome the complaints from the Vatican and its ambassador to Ireland "was fit to take behind diplomatic protocols to avoid meeting with the Murphy Commission." The Vatican said the commission had "left gone through the appropriate diplomatic channels."

Victims groups said they will seek monetary compensation, which could lead to a financial crisis for the Irish Church.

In the United States, hit by a priestly pedophilia scandal in 2003, seven dioceses have filed for bankruptcy protection in the wake of thousands of sex abuse claims against priests.

"Many who have suffered throughout their lives from the impact of sexual abuse by priests in childhood may realize that their pain and suffering could have been avoided if senior churchmen and the civil authorities had acted properly in response to complaints received from earlier victims," one open letter to the Pope said.

The Pope has strongly condemned priestly sexual abuse during his trips to two countries hard hit by widespread scandals—the US and Australia. In December, he expressed his "outrage, betrayal and shame" over the Irish scandal. Reuters

Muslim firebrands challenge Hamas rule in Gaza, defy truce

RAFAH, GAZA STRIP—THEY preached jihad, or holy war, adhere to an ultraconservative form of Islam and are becoming a headache even for Hamas, the Islamic militant group that rules Gaza.

Jihadi Salafis, as they are known, have organized into small, shadowy armed groups that have clashed with Hamas forces and fired rockets in brief incidences of Hamas' informal wars.

Perhaps even more troublesome for Hamas, they claim a growing appeal among Gazans in the territory's pervasive culture of isolation and poverty, raising fears they could serve as a bridgehead for their ideological twin, al-Qaida, from which they take their call for global holy war.

Hamas insists it dismantled the groups after a mosque shootout last summer that left 20 dead.

But after months of lying low, Jihadi Salafis become active again. Besides mounting rocket fire on Israel in recent weeks, they blew up the car of a Hamas chief outside his southern Gaza home. The chief, who was not in the car, was unhurt, and the group that claimed responsibility said the blast was a warning.

"We will not stop targeting the figures of this perverted, crooked government," Hamas's breaking their hearts and releasing the poor land of the Gaza Strip of these abominations," said the group, the Soldiers of the Monotheism Brigades. "What will soon not still be tender and more terrible."

Going by names like "Rolling Thunder" and "Army of God," they oppose Hamas for refraining from imposing Islamic law since ruling power in Gaza in 2007 and largely sticking to a tactical truce with Israel since the latter's devastating offensive last year.

Expert opinion holds that al-Qaida has shown little interest in inciting the Gaza groups it inspired into the fold. But even as al-Qaida bolthold in Gaza could pose a significant challenge to Hamas' control as well as to attempts to get off Western governments' hot seats like and lift the Israeli-Egyptian blockade of Gaza.

Hamas' own rapid rise to power is a reminder of the appeal of militant ideas in the absence of a peace process.

Gaza's Hamas prime minister, Ismail Haniyeh, acknowledges that some in Gaza have been swept up to the ideas of the Arab-Global jihadi groups.

"I think a phenomenon among some young men in Gaza, they will be influenced by ideas and reasonings," said Haniyeh in a sermon to mosque worshippers. However, he rejected any suggestion of an al-Qaida presence in Gaza and repudiated the call to global jihad.

Still, Hamas says fundamentalists—Salafists is a historic for Salafi groups with its own gradual path to more Islamization, including a "virtue campaign" that urges women to cover up. But Hamas has stopped short of a Taliban-style assault on secularism.

"It is more difficult for Hamas to deal with these people because they are selling the same goods: Religion," said Mohamad Abu Samadi, a Gaza human rights researcher.

The Salafi movement has gained notice in the Middle East, gravitating an ultraconservative Islam similar to Saudi Arabia's strictly segregating the sexes and interpreting religious texts literally.

Salafis tend to be unsophisticated, but a minority dissident version embraces the al-Qaida call for holy war against the West and secular-Arab leaders in its camp.

Hamas, on the other hand, confines itself to pushing for a Palestinian state and says the sole target of its suicide bombings and missile attacks is Israel, and makes compromises with other movements, even participating in Palestinian elections in 2006.

Those stances are reviled as sin-debasing by the Salafi purists.

Their groups began to emerge in Gaza after Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005. A study co-authored by a former deputy chief of Israel's Shin Bet security service enhances their membership in the low hundreds, including disgruntled followers of established Islamic militant groups.

The Jihadi Salafis are suspected in a series of bombings of Internet cafés and music stores in Gaza, seen as promoting sin of vice. AP

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A 7-year-old Rio Carnival queen parades in tears

RIO DE JANEIRO—A TEMPUL TYRE-old Rio Carnival queen led exuberant dancers through the Sambadrome stadium on Sunday, in a distressed state that may add to controversy over whether a tiny child should perform in such a high-pressure, sexually charged role.

Julia Lins emerged blinking into the bright lights and deafening fireworks of the Sambadrome and soon burst into tears as photographers and reporters swarmed around her before her samba group started to parade.

Wearing a short purple dress, a sequined hat, tiara and silver tiara, Lins duly smirked silent in the face of reporters questions and then, clearly upset, had to be comforted by her father and other performers as the music flowed.

It was unclear to what extent Lins, the youngest drum corps queen in memory, completed the full parade, although her father said that he held her hand as she crossed the finish line.

"She cried because there were a lot of people on top of her," said her father, Marcio Lins, who is also president of the Unidos da Tijuca samba group, co-edited.

The selection of a third grader is a role usually occupied by high-heeled models and sometimes stop open-mics has sparked a heated debate in Brazil and abroad over the role of children in the unusual festival of hedonism.

That debate was still rumbling as Rio Carnival kicked into high gear with the top samba schools' first parades watched over by thousands of fans and celebrities including US pop star Madonna.

"I'm against it, she is too young. A seven-year-old shouldn't be in front of the drum corps," said 22-year-old Luiz Paulo, bedecked in silver and feathers as he prepared to parade.

Lins, who gives photographers right to parade by a judge last week after a child protection agency tried to block her because of concern about a child performing in a sexual role.

Drum queens, dozen for their looks and sass, to frills, dance around in front of hundreds of drummers, weaving their way from wing to wing, cheered boisterously and high heels.

But many carnival aficionados say children have been unfairly placed in major role in the party and that the sexualization of drum corps queens is a recent development.

"The drum queen isn't necessarily a issue of role," said one Vicissitudes drummer, 25-year-old Carlos Alberto.

"Every school has the right to innovate and to put the artist of its choice at the head of the corps...but it a woman with a gorgeous body or an innocent and marvelous child," Some might argue that Lins was not the youngest star of the show on Sunday.

Drum queen Adriane Galisteu danced for the Unidos da Tijuca school with a 4-month-old baby inside her tremble. After finding out weeks before the carnival she was pregnant and getting the combat go-ahead to parade.

"I'm feeling twice as emotional. I always thought I would parade pregnant and seeing me in a bar comic, "The TV presenter, who is rumored to have a collection of more than 1,000 bikinis, told Reuters as she displayed her toned figure for cameras.

A dazzling spectacle of movement and color, the annual parades are also a serious competition for the bragging rights that are judged on their precision, choreography and design.

Sunday's parades, following days of heavily street parties, included a float in honor of late pop star Michael Jackson, a giant wooden horse, hordes of sexiest Egyptian, and a celebration of the capital city of Brasília.

An oppressive heat wave blanketing Rio ensured the parades didn't have it easy and were constantly clamoring for bottles of water. But they still ended the parade on a note of ecstasy that Sambadromic veterans say has to be felt to be believed. Reuters

QUEEN Queca Julia (2 y.), dances during the first night of the carnival parade on Feb. 14. AFP

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BUSINESS

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El Niño dries up ₱1.4B worth of crops

OUTGOING Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) president Francis Lim joins the Dragon Dance to celebrate the Chinese New Year at the PSE Tektite, Ortigas Center in Pasig. Yesterday was Lim's last day in office. RAFE GUERRA

DA says damage still within gov't projection

By Riza T. Olchondra

DAMAGE TO AGRICULTURE DUE TO THE EL NIÑO weather phenomenon has reached ₱1.4 billion, with corn crops bearing the brunt of the extreme heat, according to field estimates from the Department of Agriculture.

Official documents showed that the total damage reported as of Feb. 8 included ₱1.05 billion worth of corn, ₱340 million worth of rice and ₱1.39 million worth of high-value crops. Volume-wise, 80,000 tons of corn, 30,380 tons of rice and 182 tons of high-value crops such as fruits and vegetables have been damaged.

However, Rodolfo Galeb, special assistant to the undersecretary for field operations at agriculture department, stressed that there was "no cause for alarm yet" since the damage was still within government projections.

Earlier, the governor of Isabela was placed under a state of calamity due to agricultural losses caused by the El Niño dry spell.

"We haven't had rain since December," Philippine Maize Federation vice president Isidro Acosta, who is based in Isabela, told the Inquirer in a phone interview.

Acosta said the governorate had tried to organize cloud-seeding operations but the skies remained clear. "There are no clouds to seed," he said.

According to Cagayan Valley regional police commander Chief Supt. Roberto Damian, who is also chair of the Regional Disaster Coordinating Council, the government has ordered to give free fuel to farmers for use in irrigation pumps.

Agriculture Undersecretary Joel Batallones has confirmed that irrigation pumps were being lent to farmers in areas where cloud seeding was not possible.

The Bureau of Agricultural Statistics reported last month that corn production for the January-June 2010 period was forecast at 5.21 million metric tons (MT), or 0.28-percent less than the 2009 level.

The decline was attributed to a 1.43-percent contraction or 17,000 hectares of harvest area.

"This could largely be observed in Cagayan Valley, Western Visayas and Soccsksargen," BAS said in a report.

In 2009, corn managed to post a 1.53-percent increase in production given increases in area harvested and yield per hectare.

Meanwhile, rice production for calendar year 2009 rose three-3.31 percent from the 2008 level owing to the decrease in yield brought by the adverse effects of Typ- to newspaper

Lim ends fruitful stint at PSE

By Doris C. Dumlao

ON HIS LAST DAY IN OFFICE YESTERDAY, outgoing Philippine Stock Exchange president Francis Lim urged the local bourse to execute corporate governance initiatives on listed investee companies in the stock market.

Lim, the longest-serving president of the highly politicized local bourse, is a key proponent of the separation of the regulatory and business functions of the exchange by spinning off its market regulation division (MRD) and nationally-the latter regulation division (BRD).

The MRD is in charge of broker regulation while the BRD regulates listed companies.

"The proposed segregation will strategically avoid the conflict of interest inherent in investors a stock exchange and a listed company. It will not only strengthen the governance and credibility of the exchange as a regulator, but it will also enable the PSE to devote more time to business development activities as a for-profit entity," Lim said.

"The PSE is a publicly listed company so it does have a fundamental mandate to enhance shareholder value," he stressed.

Lim is also urging the PSE to continue taking the lead in pushing for the passage of two unfinished pieces of legislation, the Stock Market Competitiveness Act (SMCA) and the Collective Investments Schemes Law (CISLaw).

"These are intended to add to the PSE's range of listed companies and menu of products like exchange-traded funds (ETFs) and equities-based options and futures. These legislative measures will help our stock market catch up with the rest of the region," Lim said.

Lim assumed office on Sept. 15, 2004, and served two terms as president and chief executive, the longest for a PSE president.

"Among his accomplishments, Lim is credited with building management and staff who are respected professionals and who possess a progressive attitude that will lead the exchange in the next century," PSE chair Hans Sicat said in his recent message to bourse employees.

Under his leadership, Lim led efforts in establishing a legal environment meant to encourage more capital market activities, finding his voices. Five capital market laws were passed—the Personal Equity and Retirement Account Act (Peral), Credit Information System Act (Cisa), Documentary Stamp Tax (DST) exemption for the stock market, the Real Estate Investment Trusts Act (REITA) and the Financial Rehabilitation and Insolvency Act (FRIA).

"The past years, while not exactly a walk in the park, have been very fulfilling both professionally and personally. The opportunity has allowed me to enrich my limits as a person and as a manager to a point where I never thought it was possible to reach," Lim said.

He said the fundamental market reforms supported by Congress—together with the PSE's inroads in capital market education, trading system upgrade, market integrity and corporate governance reform—would position the stock market for further growth and development.

Aside from helping enact capital market-related laws, Lim also convinced the government to introduce a three-tait Capital Markets subject for college students and to integrate stock market topics as part of the high school education.

Remittances grew 5.6% to $17.35B in '09

By Michelle V. Remo

REMITTANCES SENT TO THE PHILIPPINES grew faster than expected in 2009 in what monetary officials said was proof that demand for Filipino labor did not shrink despite the storms of the global crisis.

Money sent by Filipinos abroad reached $17.35 billion last year, registering a 5.6-percent growth from the $16.43 billion the previous year, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

The growth in remittances outpaced the BSP's own forecast of only 4 percent. It also proved wrong earlier predictions that money from Filipinos overseas would shrink by as much as 20 percent because of layoffs and company closures in countries that fell into a recession, including the United States.

In December alone, remittances amounted to $1.58 billion, up 11.4 percent from the $1.42 billion recorded in the same month of 2008.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. earlier said remittances managed to grow despite the crisis because layoffs in some countries were offset by hirings by companies in alternative labor markets.

Bernardo Villegas, economics professor at the University of Asia & the Pacific, earlier said Filipinos who lost their jobs because of the crisis did not go home but instead

Unilab readies new patent invalidation case against Pfizer

By Abigail L. Ho

LOCAL PHARMACEUTICAL FIRM UNITED Laboratories Inc. is preparing another patent invalidation case against itself rivals and Pfizer Inc., this time for the crystalline form of the latter's Atorvastatin Calcium sold worldwide as drug.

In a briefing yesterday, Unilab vice president for legal services Jose Maria Ochave said that, following the Makati Regional Trial Court's denial of Pfizer's application for injunction, Unilab was even more confident that it had a strong case against Pfizer.

"Because of the submission of (Pfizer's own witnesses), we'll also move for the invalidation of their other patents, not just for the amorphous form of Atorvastatin Calcium," Ochave said.

In a five-page ruling issued Feb. 8, the Makati RTC voted clear Pfizer legal division chief Michelle Evangelista, subsidiary Pfizer Export Corp. and Pfizer Inc. of infringing Unilab's Atorvastatin Calcium, with Patent No. 20149, was covered by Patent No. 26550, which had already expired.

Another Pfizer witness, Pfizer USA senior scientist Shannon Gallagher said Patent No. 20149 was actually of the same structure as that of expired Patent No. 26550.

"If there are admissions made by one party, you don't even have to present any witnesses because those admissions are already binding against the party. Pfizer is just unduly prolonging its patent on atorvastatin Calcium," said Senior Associate of Villaraza Cruz Marcelo & Angeles and retained counsel for Unilab.

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE REGULAR MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS AND ELECTION OF DIRECTORS FOR 2010 — 2011 of INTER-MEDICAL UNIFIED SYSTEMS,INC. | MEDICAL CENTER MAKATI will be on March 8, 2010 at the hour of 1:00 p.m. at Diversion Road, Palico IV, Imus, Cavite. Only stockholders of record in the books of the Corporation at the close of business on February 10, 2010, will be entitled to vote at the meeting.

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RP secure from euro woes

By Michelle V. Perez

Macrofundamentals still strong, says BSP

THE BANGKO SENTRAL ng Pilipinas has downplayed concerns that foreign capital inflows to the Philippines may shrink due to the debt woes of Greece, Spain and Portugal.

The Philippines' core economic fundamentals remain strong, central bank officials said.

"In the case of the Philippines, we have good macroeconomic fundamentals in general," BSP Deputy Governor Nora Dominguez told reporters, stressing that capital inflows to the Philippines would be sustained.

At present, the Philippine government is scheduled with a huge budget deficit. Latest data from the National Statistics Office showed that the deficit stood at P277.3 billion in the first 11 months of 2009.

The deficit is estimated to be a little below 4 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

But the BSP noted that other developing countries are in the double-digit levels.

The government was supposed to balance the budget in 2008, but the global economic crisis forced it to defer the goal to 2015.

Economic managers said the government needed to spend more on infrastructure and social services to jump-prime the economy. They said pump-priming was needed to help the domestic economy avoid a recession.

"We, [the Philippine government] did not succeed in balancing our budget, but for understandable reasons. First, you have the supposition to create the economy seven a crisis through stimulus. Second, we were hit by two destructive typhoons that require rehabilitation expenditures by the government," Dominguez said.

Greece, Spain and Portugal have been reported to be in the grip of a serious fiscal problem, characterized by mounting debts. Rating agencies have confirmed early huge stimulus spending aggravated the problems of the European countries.

Some economists fear that the debt woes in European may adversely affect developing Asian countries like the Philippines.

But Dominguez said that so far there was not much negative impact resulting from the debt problems in Europe.

He said the impact on the peso was also minimal, although he admitted that the BSP had to intervene to ensure the peso would not drop sharply.

'10 IPP focused on free trade, green economy

THE BOARD OF INVESTMENT hopes to derive maximum benefits from the global economic rebound, the implementation of various free trade agreements, and the government's efforts to bring the country's investment climate to the next level in 2010.

During yesterday's public hearing, the BOI revealed its proposed framework and listing for 2010, which included such new entries as green projects and disaster prevention, mitigation and recovery projects.

The green projects category covers the manufacture of goods—including but not limited to, capital equipment, lighting, and construction materials—that will result in more efficient use of energy, natural resources, and raw materials.

Pollution reduction projects can also qualify for registration.

Disaster prevention, mitigation and recovery projects, on the other hand, cover disaster mitigation projects such as flood control systems and early warning systems for typhoons or dikes, rehabilitation projects such as the rebuilding of roads or other infrastructures damaged by an act of God.

More items included in the 2009 IPP were approved in the 2010 proposed framework.

Among these were strategic projects, which were described as those that "can exhibit high social economic criteria and require large investments that will significantly contribute to the country's economic development."

For projects to fall under the category, they have to meet certain of these proposed criteria: minimum investment of $300 million, employment for at least 5,000 individuals, use of new or unconventionally accepted technologies, and creation of value-added.

-Abigail L. Ho

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Session 3: Turning Around A Struggling Sales Force
By Theresa Georgia Diaz-Parco, Customer Development Director, Johnson & Johnson Philippines

Session 4: Turning Around Distributorship
By John C. Cabato, Regional Sales Director for Asia & Middle East, Hershey's

As in previous years, 100% of the proceeds will go to various advocacies in the field of education and youth empowerment. This year's beneficiaries are the MarkProf Foundation, the Gifts and Graces Fair Trade Foundation, and the Foundation for Asian Consumer Insighting & Market Understanding (FACIMU). For registration and inquiries, you may contact us at (02) 584 5858 / 584 6888 / 722 2218 / 412 8034, text 0918 91 168 86, email us at info@mastermith.net, or visit us at www.mastermith.net.

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UCPB turns around with net profit of ₱1.46B for 2009

Surge in interest earnings, treasury gains

By Doris C. Dumlao

UNITED COCONUT PLANTERS Bank finished a net profit of ₱1.46 billion last year, a turnaround from the ₱1.47 billion in net loss a year ago, on the back of a double-digit growth in interest earnings and large treasury gains.

UCPB reported yesterday that its revenues jumped 36 percent in 2009 to ₱8.77 billion from the previous year, with both trading/investment income and interest income registering double-digit growths.

The bank's chief finance officer, Cesar Rubio, said non-interest income rose 97 percent to ₱3.68 billion year-on-year on account of a sharp turnaround in trading and over-the-counter gains.

Interest income also surged 47 percent to ₱5.79 billion from 2008, driven by the robust growth of its westmont-ed loans, he added.

The bank more than doubled its investments in government securities and liquid assets to ₱42.88 billion from ₱20.46 billion and expanded the size of its loan portfolio by 16 percent to ₱91.34 billion from ₱78.51 billion as more deposits flowed in, Rubio explained.

UCPB's total deposits reached a record ₱133.68 billion in 2009, up 40 percent from ₱95.79 billion a year ago. Of the total, more than three-fourths were non-preferential deposits, which increased 35 percent to ₱101.70 billion from ₱75.50 billion as of December 2008, while deposits from Government agencies, which also increased threefold, made up the remaining one-fourth.

The national government earlier infused additional deposits into UCPB, where bulk of the shares remained under state sequestration.

Rubio said the upgrade of the bank's automated systems and the continuing program to renovate branch premises and relocate several branches to better sites would further boost deposit generation efforts this year. An even bigger increase in deposits is targeted to support its expansion for 2010.

The bank ended 2009 with total assets of ₱156.22 billion, up 42 percent from a year ago. Total capital stood at ₱13.43 billion, three times the level in 2008.

REIT becomes Lim's legacy

MARKET RIDER

Dave Ramos

IF IT IS THE STORY OF HOW PSE president Frisco Lim decided to leave his office is what you think he will be remembered by—as they usually are in the case of other past PSE presidents—the legacy.

He is the longest-yet serving president the PSE ever had. More notably, he is responsible for the passage into law of some measures that will indeed contribute to the development of the capital market. The most significant is the recently signed Real Estate Investment Law or REIT.

The passage of the REIT is a remarkable accomplishment. It places Francis Lim as one of the few PSE presidents who exactly understood their job. That of promoting the capital market into a more effective catalyst to mobilize savings, in addition to making it a truly equally effective vehicle for the wider distribution of wealth among the people of the nation, real estate in particular.

The REIT is not for investors, but it does like deep appreciation of what it can do to further develop the market that makes it attainable to him. He had the imagination to see its potentials in making the capital market a far richer mine for investments.

Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore are among those countries that have made REIT as part of their most rewarding investment choices for the general investing public. It's in the experience of these countries where Francis Lim and staff drew inspiration to craft most of the features of our present REIT.

The REIT is one of the few very financial deals beneficial to both investors and issuers. Investors can truly make good returns for their money, while issuers are given the window of opportunity to engage in timely and financially rewarding real estate projects by being unburdened with the problem of incurring new funds.

REIT projects

The "REIT is defined as a stock corporation established principally for the purpose of owning income-generating real estate assets. Examples of income-generating assets include apartment buildings, office buildings, warehouses, medical facilities, resorts, hotels, shopping centers. REIT may also include infrastructure projects like highways, railroads, prisons, and other similar projects."

The latter projects are exciting new investment choices. Compared to the usual real estate projects mentioned above, they are more handy investments. They are here to meet negatively circumstantial downturns.

Basic features

The REITs to be negotiable are first to be registered and listed in the stock exchange. To qualify, it must have a minimum paid-up capital of ₱500 million with at least 1,000 shareholders from the general investing public owning at least 10 shares each. Their total ownership must amount to no less than a third of the REIT's outstanding capital stock.

A REIT may invest in an investment-type real estate located outside the Philippines. Such investment, however, must not exceed 40 percent of the REIT's deposited property. And said investment has to have the approval of the Securities and Exchange Commission first to ascertain that the rehabilitation of the country can also be possible and fair in value based on acceptable and independent proof.

To ensure that funds are not diverted from their envisioned purpose, at least 75 percent of the deposited property of the REIT must be invested in income-generating real estate. It must not be invested in any one security amounting to more than 15 percent of its available funds, except when they are invested in government securities. In this case, the limit is up to 20 percent.

Another feature that may safeguard the integrity of the REIT is that total borrowings and deferred payments of a REIT should not exceed 35 percent of its deposited property and up to 70 percent only if with investment grade rating.

In order to minimize investor risk, income-generating real estate assets are to be managed professionally by an independent REIT fund manager and property manager. Fund manager and property manager fees shall not exceed one percent of the net asset value of the assets under management. Then, at least a third of the board of directors must be independent directors.

With all of the above mechanics, it is hoped that the REIT's eventual dividend equivalent to 90 percent of distributable income will add up to a big absolute amount.

Bottom line spin

The REIT is certainly one exciting thing that made the presidency of Francis Lim in the PSE a little more memorable. It made his stately more meaningful than those of other presidents whose time just ended uneventfully due to lack of time or sheer tough-luck. He may have a little more time and he certainly made use of it to come up with a good performance first-related.

Rules of play

One Steward Cowper bugged my colleagues to listen on his lament that "there are people who manage investors in the stock market, people who push stocks and drop them when they have the chance to get out, some people to buy but they are the ones who are selling, using many brokers to cover (short) selling (schemes) ... (citing the names of companies) ... My friend's family ended with the appeal of 'help the resident ... not be deceived by greedy people in the stock market."

On the other hand, one Peter Steele evaluated the opposite where he said that, "investors had already taken the position to buy at any cost. I believe the opinion is my remarks on MRC to stress that the rules of play in the market is still that of "let the buyer beware."

Therefore, it's always better for the investors of the market to adhere remember the saying that "SEC has its love and use," and in the stock market.

You may reach the Market Rider at ramosdave@inquirer.com.ph or dave.o.ramos@yahoo.com

TKC Steel raising $1B for expansion

By Abigail L. Ho

TKC STEEL CORP. IS SEEKING TO raise up to $1 billion in funds to finance its ongoing expansion programs in the country.

It is disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, the recently-newly publicly listed steel company said it has appointed Petrowealth Nomura Goquioc Financial Advisory Inc. to lead the fundraising exercise.

Under the terms of the agreement, Petrowealth has as project management advisory will identify prospective strategic partners or investors for TKC Steel and prepare a work program for the fundraising effort.

Proceeds from the fundraising exercise will be used "to undertake [additional] integration activities, including but not limited to acquisition of offshore/onshore existing mineral for iron ore to be used as raw materials/feedstock for the blast furnace project of Tsingshan Steelworks Group."

TKC Steel subsidiary Tsingshan Steelworks' blast furnace project in Bgasi City is almost complete, the disclosure stated.

The fundraising program, the company said, was also "envisioned to provide the cornerstone investment for further expansion of the steel manufacturing and the mining industry sectors."

The company aims to have the biggest integrated steel manufacturing facility in the country.

Originally incorporated in 1998 as EQL Pilmed Inc., TKC Steel changed its primary purpose in 2007 from information technology to that of "primarily engaged in the manufacture and distribution of steel products through subsidiaries Tsingshan Steelworks and Zhangzhou Zhongkelai Steel Works Co. Ltd.

Tsingshan Steelworks manufactures steel billets, while ZZS produces various types of steel pipes, which are distributed and sold to China and other export markets.

El Niño ...

From page B1

phoon "Pepeng" and tropical storm "Ondoy."

A 1.7 percent decline is also expected for rice in the first half of 2010.

Damage to rice crops could prompt the Philippines to import three million tons of rice under a "worst-case scenario," according to officials of the state grains agency, the National Food Authority.

Remittances grew 5.6% ...

From page B1

wrought new jobs offshore.

The behavior of Filipinos was unlike other migrant workers who, on moderately went back to their home economies after being laid off. What gave added that some foreign companies prioritized Filipinos in deciding which of their employees to retain.

Remittances are a closely watched economic indicator as these largely fuel household consumption that, in turn, serves as a key driver of the economy.

Economic managers said the sustained rise in remittances was one reason the Philippines avoided a recession last year. The Philippine economy, as measured by the gross domestic product (GDP), grew 0.9 percent in 2009.

For this year, the BSP expects remittances to grow 6 percent from the 2009 level.

SMC property unit to sell off 31% stake in Bank of Commerce

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PROPERTY UNIT OF SAN MIGUEL Corp. conglomerate plans to sell its 31 percent stake in medium-sized banks Bank of Commerce.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange on Monday, San Miguel Properties Inc. (SMPI) said its board had authorized the sale of the stake to "our most interested buyers."

The sale would be subject to regulatory approval, it added.

But the planned sale does not necessarily mean that the San Miguel group is giving up its controlling stake in the commercial bank.

While SMPI is selling its stake, the conglomerate has expressed interest to subscribe to a P6.9 billion bank capital call planned by the bank this year, industry sources said.

The San Miguel group, through SMPI and San Miguel Brewery Inc. to form a total of 52 percent of Bancommerce, the 35th largest bank in the country with total assets of about P149.15 billion.

Although the San Miguel group has been selling off significant minority shares in various operating subsidiaries, it continues to retain majority control over them. The conglomerate also emphasized by an exception when it sold a large chunk of shares in flagship beer brewery San Miguel Brewery Inc. to Kirin Holdings of Japan.

The conglomerate plans to use the money (and, in getting a new investor for beer) to repay Citibank San Miguel Inc., as well as fund units San Miguel Pure Foods Co. Inc.

Bancommerce, for its part, has set a new capital raising program that calls for the issuance of about 40 million shares this year to raise about P6.9 billion in fresh funds.

Based on its published balance sheet, as of September 2009, Bancommerce had a stockholders' equity of P10.35 billion.

It had net loans and receivables of P89 billion and a deposit base of P93.37 billion.

The entry of San Miguel group as controlling stockholder in BanCom heightened prospects for the bank, analysts said.

"The SMC group's majority ownership has strengthened Bancommerce's competitive position," said Philippine Ratings Corp. when it upgraded its rating on the bank.

Gov't debt stock hits P4.424T

By Bernadette W. Damicog

55% borrowed from domestic lenders, Treasury officials say

THE GOVERNMENT'S DEBT stock reached P4.424 trillion as of end-December, up by P600 billion from the previous month's level amid a strong peso, according to the Bureau of the Treasury.

With working age Filipinos numbering some 59.3 million, the amount of total outstanding debt would mean that Filipinos 15 years old and above will each have a share of P74,582.

BTr data on total outstanding debts showed that 55 percent, or P2.452 trillion, of total debt was sourced from domestic lenders.

Local debt went up by 0.1 percent (month-on-month), or P3.6 billion more than the P2.448 trillion posted in October.

The increase meant that the value of debt papers issued was more than those redeemed, bringing outstanding government securities to a total of P2.452 trillion in November.

On the other hand, 45 percent, or P1.972 trillion, of total outstanding debt were booked in foreign currencies mostly in US dollar, euro and yen, referred to in the Treasury circle as "third currencies."

Aside from loans extended by multilateral lenders and official aid from foreign governments, the Philippines also borrows internationally through the issuance of bonds denominated in these currencies.

Foreign borrowings decreased by P3 billion or 0.2 percent from the P1.975 trillion eared to overseas lenders in October.

In November, the government also received P5 billion in net settlement of foreign loans.

A factor that dampened the decrease in foreign debt was the late repricing of investment during the previous month, as well as the conversion of loans from the Asian Development Bank from yen into dollars, which accounted for an additional P6 billion.

In November, government debt payer jumped to dollars amounting to an equivalent of P3.098 trillion, while yen and euro loans stood at P57 billion and P80.8 billion, respectively.

For this, the government's total contingent debt—composed mainly of non-sovereign guarantees—went up by 0.6 billion, or 0.6 percent to P788.6 billion.

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MUSTARD SEED

Sumitomo to invest $2.107B in Surigao mine project

By Rico T. Diplomado

SUMITOMO METAL MINING Co., Ltd. (SMM) is planning to invest P95 billion (P2.107 billion) over the next three years to expand and strengthen its nickel operations in the country, particularly the Taganito project in Surigao del Norte.

Taganito has a joint venture foundation and it hoped to increase nickel production in the country to about 180,000 tons a year.

"Supplies of mixed sulfide (nickel-cobalt) from HPAL (high-pressure acid leach) project in Taganito, set to go on-stream in 2013, coupled with an increase in electrolytic nickel production capacity to 65,000 tons a year, will enable achievement of a 180,000 tons a year nickel production system.

"Under the long-range management vision, plans call for a further increase to 350,000 tons a year through investments in group companies from the Solomon Project and the Philippines."

Sumitomo said in a business plan posted on its web site.

The company said the plan covers three years (2010 through 2012).

In August last year, SMM said it had decided to proceed with a project to produce nickel-cobalt mixed sulfide in Taganito, Claver, Surigao del Norte.

The Taganito Project is planned as a large-scale hydrometallurgical project where high-pressure acid leaching (HPAL) process will be applied.

The project is designed to produce 30,000 metric tons of nickel-cobalt mixed sulfide a year.

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Conspiracy teary

THEY SAY THAT A LIE, EVEN TOLD A THOUSAND times, is still a lie.

Apparently it is easy to settle this once and, considering the size of the lie, relatively inexpensive.

Imagine if all you had to do was pay off a couple of officials, in which top-of-the-heads would score for each other, perhaps to save their positions, putting up with media-other's — and, "hold still for it."

It can be point was the memo of Civil Service Commission Chair Francisco Duque III to the Lois at the Palace, when he was at health secretary.

Duque wanted the President to ban the presence of "several agencies" in eight hotels governing provinces in the south.

Duque aided with some fake environment groups over the proposed ban, warning the DOH-million-a-year human report in dentry to switch to manual spraying.

Banana growers have been fighting the Duque-supported ban, arguing that it would kill an industry employing some 200,000 people in war-torn Mindanao.

In June the same, nevertheless, Duque wrote a memo to the Lois to oppose the ban just like that. He even claimed that the World Health Organization, or the WHO, already recommended the ban.

It was, of course a lie — a big, fat lie.

Here, the Department of Health (under Duque) asked the WHO for a "peer review" of the DOH-commissioned study that was funded by millions of pesos of your tax money. The facts was recommended as a result of that study.

It is also true that some 10 officials of that same administration held a "video" conference with WHO experts regarding that same study.

The teleconference was held last December, and any info there was that the WHO experts only received "summaries" of the DOH-funded study.

For instance, the WHO experts noted that the study had such a small "sample" of the large population in the Davao areas that it could contain "statistical uncertainties."

Well, the study talked about "health issues" in a small city in a small barangay in one city in one province of a banana-growing region in Mindanao.

Look — it did not exist, even, in its subject, the very farm workers who should be the most concerned about the aerial spraying in their place of work.

OK, it may be true that, aside from the teleconference, the WHO could have written DOH-Lois Duque I a letter on the proposed ban.

The fact of the matter is, Duque has yet to make public the WHO letter, if indeed it exists.

From what I gathered, Duque's claim that the WHO is in his letter supported the ban was a big, fat lie.

But — horror of horrors — our beloved government officials kept quiet while Duque, teary-eyed, cried to mislead the Lois into issuing an executive order to impose the ban.

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Bonoil III

As I said, there were 10 officials all in all in that WHO teleconference. Among them were undersecretaries, bureau chiefs, technical staff and so on.

What do you think: Was there a conspiracy somewhere there?

They included representatives from the DENR, Fertilizer and Pesticides Authority (under the Department of Agriculture), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Labor and Employment, and the University of the Philippines.

These are government offices that draw their salaries from your taxes, including of course the Lotus' pool by those 200,000 workers in the banana industry.

* * *

I HAVE a piece of good news about the Bureau of Customs. It registered its largest collection last month by about P800 million — for the first time in years.

Based on a report by Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales, the BOC collected some P17.3 billion in January this year, against the DOF-set target of a little more than P17 billion.

Of course the biggest improvement in BOC performance happened in the premier district Port of Manila.

Internet-ingly, the district has been missing its collection targets, and raises oddly so, for 11 straight months before the Lotus at the Palace decided to appoint a new guy to head it — a lawyer named Angel Garchitorena, who was said to be recommended by Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile to the President.

Garchitorena's appointment also earned the ire of BOC oil trade and some smuggling syndicates.

Anyway, collection at the Port of Manila amounted to almost P4 billion last month, versus the target of about P3 billion.

That was a "first" in the district in almost a year. And they say the Garchitorena was no good?

* * *

WHO IS this top government official who just bought a huge property in a posh subdivision in Makati called Dasmariñas Village?

Whoever he or she is, although the initials are... well, no comment ... the official must be loaded. The last time I checked, a small (600-square-meter lot) property in the subdivision would cost at least P60 million.

Not only that, our hero is also said to have bought — in cash — another property in the classy seaside residential resort called Punta Fuego.

That is the real estate project of Landco Pacific Corp., which was acquired by Fedev Island in Batangas, complete with hotel, resort, yacht club, and golf course.

In other words, Punta Fuego is the playground of the rich and famous. Oh, and by now, of our favorite government official!

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BUSINESS

Greece fiscal woes cap euro, stocks

SYDNEY—THE EURO HEDdled near 9-month lows against the US dollar on Monday and share markets fell as investors braced coming meetings of euro zone policymakers would yield nothing quick on measures on Greece.

Euro zone finance ministers meet on Monday and Tuesday to discuss the crisis of confidence in debt-laden Greece and are expected to make no more painful medicine.

European shares were expected to open slightly higher, backing weakness in Asian stocks, as investors awaited the finance ministers' meeting.

Dr Stanley European Central Bank president Jean-Claude Trichet said Greece needed to take necessary extra measures to make to recovery plan credible.

Yet various media reports say debates will centre any new measures until mid-March, when officials from the EU, ECB and International Monetary Fund are due to dissect Greece's deficit-cutting plans.

The European Council heads and European Commission agreed last week to work together to monitor Greece but EU leaders failed to come up with a concrete rescue package. Euro zone officials appear adamant that the hard work must be done primarily by Greece at this stage, either than by the EU.

"A pledge of solidarity and promises of a tough stance on Greece are a certainty. As well be the hope from them making the promises that commitments alone will be sufficient to soothe market nerves," said Michael Sturbo, chief economist at Commonwealth Bank in Sydney.

Reuters

Japan grows faster in Q4

Momentum may fade as stimulus dwindles

SHOPPERS walk past an apparel shop displaying a large "sale" sign in Tokyo. Japan's recession-hit economy shrank in 2009 in a nominal gross domestic product of just under $5.1 trillion. —AP

TOKYO—JAPAN'S ECONOMY grew faster than expected in the fourth quarter with a stimulus-fuelled rebound in domestic demand and a corporate investment revival rounding rising deflationary pressure and the risk of a slowdown in 2010.

The government, which has been pressing the Bank of Japan to broaden its policy response to deflation, drew little comfort from the 1.1 percent expansion in the world's second-largest economy compared with the previous quarter. The median forecast in a Reuters poll of analysts was for growth of 0.9 percent.

Markets focused on the record 3 percent annual fall in the GDP deflator as a sign that the large gap between supply and demand was making Japan deeper into deflation. Japanese government bond futures hit a two-week high after the data.

Domestic demand was the economy's brightest spot in October-December, adding 0.6 percentage point to GDP growth, the first contribution in seven quarters.

That momentum was likely to fade, economists said, citing the dwindling impact of stimulus measures by the previous government and uncertainty over how quickly the new administration plans would boost consumption.

The gloomy outlook leaves Japan's policy makers with the wrenching question of how to achieve high growth when the huge public debt limits the government's ability to pump-prime the economy and when the central bank has exhausted its conventional policy options.

"While such inflationary tendencies persist, the need for a policy response is modest as the BOJ is increasing, not diminishing," said Yoshiaki Tsuruhiro, chief economist at Goldman Sachs Japan.

The BOJ reviews policy at a two-day meeting that ends on Thursday and most economists expect no change in monetary policy.

The central bank pumped more cash into the banking system at an emergency meeting in December and has signalled it is ready to ease again if financial markets destabilise.

Government officials have been pushing the BOJ to do more to fight deflation, although they have avoided the fierce criticism that preceded the BOJ's emergency meeting in December when one minister said the central bank "can't follow" "asleep at the wheel".

Reuters

Oil steady near $74 on China jitters

SINGAPORE—US CRUDE WAS steady near $74 on Monday after a three-day rebound triggered by Japanese growth data raised concerns that energy demand would taper off as China tightens monetary policy.

Crude fell for the first time in four days on Friday, touching an intra-day low of $72.06, after China's central bank increased the percentage of cash banks must keep as reserves, the second such increase this year.

US crude for March delivery shed 8 cents to $74.08 a barrel. London ICE Brent for April delivered 34 cents to $72.75.

"When you look at prices I don't see much more downside," said Mark Pervan, senior commodities analyst at ANZ in Melbourne.

"China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan and other Asian economies are going to perform very well this year so we're banking what the Chinese government is doing to control growth." Japan's economy expanded at its fastest pace in two quarters, and more than expected, in October-December as an export recovery spurred capital spending.

Optimism around the world are set to mark liquidity in all markets on Monday.

China's markets are closed this week for the Lunar New Year holiday, so are markets in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore. In the US markets are closed for Presidents' Day.

European markets are still open, and it is mixed there on debt-laden Greece that could see the euro test the euro-and-US dollar.

Reuters

Fitful recovery tests cosumer goods makers in 2010

CHICAGO—THE WORLD'S biggest food companies and household products makers have a selective return to consumer spending in 2010, testing their resolve to avoid promotions and suggesting more industry energies to come.

Their strategies to cope with a slow and fitful recovery will be the focus of the Consumer Analyst Group of New York (CAGNY) meeting that begins this week in Boca Raton, Florida.

Starting today top executives from Kraft Foods , Procter & Gamble, PepsiCo and some two dozen other consumer packaged goods companies outline their plans to get consumers to buy more and keep costs down.

They are convening just two weeks after Kraft won control of British chocolatier Cadbury Plc in an $18.4-billion deal to create the world's biggest confectioner and drive growth through more exposure to emerging markets.

"I think everybody's seeing that that was an expression of more (a) sense, but I think that's (just) an expression," Kraft Foods CEO Brenda Barnes said in an interview.

A year ago, food and household companies were benefiting from price increases taken in 2008 as commodity costs soared.

Now as consumers rely more on lower-priced store brands or spend less, manufacturers are under pressure to discount.

In the past few weeks, companies like ketchup maker H.J.Heinz Co. and bread baker Sara Lee said they would increase spending on promotions for some products to regain market share.

By contrast, household product makers are pinning their hopes on consumers' loyalty to certain brand names and their eagerness to try new products. P&G is launching thinner, more absorbent Pampers diapers while Colgate-Palmolive is touting Speed Stick Stainguard deodorants.

Reuters

Samsung, Sony Ericsson unveil new smartphones

BARCELONA—SAMSUNG Electronics and Sony Ericsson unveiled their new top smartphone models on Sunday, both hoping to improve their performance in the more lucrative part of the phone market.

Samsung, the world No. 2 handset maker, unveiled its flagship smartphone model Wave—using a new touch screen technology and the first phone to run Bada operating system.

"Samsung's commitment to bada is underlined by the fact that it is using it to power its flagship product for the show but it's going to be an uphill struggle to get the developer community on board," said Ben Wood, research director at CCS Insight.

Earlier this month Samsung unveiled a plan to revitalise smartphone shipments in 2010 and promote its own bada software platform.

Analysts, however, have been doubtful of Samsung's efforts to "belatedly build a new open platform. With limited volumes, phones using bada will have difficulty attracting application developers or operators support," it added in its report. "Bada is promising but not ready yet," said analyst Carolina Milanesi from research firm Gartner.

Samsung said it plans to launch five to seven phone models using bada software in 2010.

Samsung and Sony Ericsson have been consistently ranking 4th and 5th after PC-like functions increasingly turning away from their feature phones to compact-like smartphones from top vendors Nokia , Apple and Research In Motion.

JC Hou, the head of Samsung's mobile operations, told Reuters in an interview that with the help of bada...which can be used also in cheaper models...the company would benefit from surging demand for new smartphones in emerging markets.

Reuters

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Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan
LIFESTYLE Wellness

Girl on girl action—on a pole

By Bianca Consunji
Contributor

ON A DARK, SILENT STAGE, TWO women walk to a silver pole. Dance routine of pipe(s) in motion (play and a spotlight snaps on to reveal both of them on the pole—Modified.

The audience, initially stunned, breaks into applause and scattered hoots of support.

The music goes on, and Christina Dy and Mirell Macalinao—the faces behind the otherwise tantalizing stage hosts name of GoDIVGirl (GVG), arguably one of Manila's most popular pole acts—begin a series of surprising sexy on a pole. They claw-her up the pole, spin around it, balance on each other, turn upside down; it seems there is nothing they can't do on that unyielding piece of metal.

But make no mistake, this is no messy hot act. In fact, by day, Dy and Macalinao aren't even professional dancers.

The 33-year-old Dy is an acclaimed visual artist whose charcoal sketches regularly grace the walls of the Silverbox Lab (she is also one of CCP's 2009 Thirteen Artists awardees). Macalinao, 29, meanwhile, is a bank employee.

But so other people, they're pole dance rock stars whose performances are a staple at places such as Magwet, Sugalo and Room/beauty events.

Unwavering start

However, they didn't grow up dancing on every available pole they saw. In fact, Dy insists her first love-session as a student were unremarkable.

"Mich Dulce brought me, and I was hooked!" she recalls. "I was the worst student but I was challenged. Pole dancing had a lot of possibilities."

Dy and Macalinao met at Movement Dance Studio, where they took lessons under Ed Aniel, who is credited with popularizing pole dancing in the Philippines (he currently runs the Pole Dance Academy at the Clara Rosseau Studio).

"[I] and I became friends because we both enjoyed practicing long hours together in the studio, even before class hours," Macalinao says. "Later on, as I learned more and more new stuff from Cil, this inspired me to continue on practicing to improve and keep up. All those hours together led to GVG."

By adds, "Eventually our class got dissolved, so I asked Mirell, 'OK, what can we do with just the two of us?'"

While they learned the basics from Aniel, they eventually started looking online for more sources of inspiration.

"We learned 90 percent of our tricks from YouTube," Dy says. "Yes, really!" (He don't be put off by those videos of people falling from the top of the pole—with practice and supervision, it can be prevented).

Right turns

Mid at course, there was a matter of finding the right name for their new venture. Dy credits the name to her friend Nikki Vergara, who also came up with the name of the pole group she founded, the Polecats.

"I love the name," she says. "Pe were thinking, and I said I wanted a cool name that's easy to remember. And, voila!"

It goes without saying that two barely-dressed, but women who can perform gymnastic feats on a pole (occasionally blindfolded) get a lot of attention, sometimes unwanted.

"Most people's reactions are very encouraging. They clap and 'ooh' and 'aah' at the right moments," Dy shares. "I'm gonna a lot of students—and a lot of first dates!...after they've seen us perform."

But "there are times who are quite rude; some shout 'HUBAS! Lindes ere nudes mo? ano lang? Lapitapos na lang?' It's annoying, but, well, not everyone's educated enough to appreciate the artistry of it all. We don't let those stop us from performing."

Macalinao says, "Some express amusement at the clicks. I let them know that this stuff can be learned by anyone willing to work hard."

Imperfect moments

Like any co-workers, the two also have their less-than-perfect moments, but make it a point to not let it affect their performance onstage. It's difficult to not steal the pretty with jerk if you're holding on to that other person for dear life while clinging to a pole.)

Dy shares, "Usually, Mirell and I talk to each other while performing. I usually say what trick we're going to do next. Once, Mirell said no. And we were arguing and fighting while performing! Mirell mouths before these the videos, thank goodness."

Of course, the question many potential pole dancers must answered is: Have they suffered from any serious injuries?

"In our trick, with Cil balanced on my legs and me holding on to the pole carrying both our weights, I was supposed to slide slowly down," Macalinao said. "But my hands were so sticky they wouldn't budge at all! It was so heavy and I wanted to let go so badly, but I couldn't because we'd both crash to the floor. I panicked and shouted for Cil to get off. Before that done, my foot had always been that my grip would slip and we'd crash. It never occurred to me to worry about getting my grip 'stuck' on the pole."

But other than that, the two agree the risks in pole dancing are exaggerated by YouTube videos of falling dancers.

"We're still both in one piece!" Dy declares. "We've both fallen during performances, but we're still alive and dancing."

Even a sprained wrist or two won't stop the women of GoDIVGirl from dancing.

"Pole dancing makes me strong, it helps me find a healthy lifestyle," Dy says. "It allows me to express myself in an altogether different way from drawing. And since I started teaching, it has been a venue to help other women (and men) feel that extraordinary sense of self as well."

Macalinao adds, "Pole dancing is a challenge. I enjoy working on pole tricks and I love the feeling of finally getting a beautiful pose right. Also, it empowers me to know, from experience, that every day, every hour and every minute of practice always leads to some progress."

Catch GoDIVGirl on www.facebook.com/godivgirl and www.facebook.com/polecatsmedia. Contact 0917-5396357 or call the Movement Dance Studio (Ortigas: 9498877/4944281, and Makati: 8926208) for details.

E-mail the author at bianca.consunji@yahoo.com.

Good humor is the best treatment for depression

WHO IS TO SAY ONE HAS A better health profile than another? Is there a formula that can guarantee perfect skin?

Here is a collection of views that can help you live and look better.

Good humor is one of the most effective treatments against depression. So, read to mind laugh.

1. Thou shalt not be perfect.
2. Thou shalt not try in to be all things to all people.
3. Thou shalt not leave things undone that ought to be done.
4. Thou shalt not spread thy self over thin.
5. Thou shalt learn to say no.
6. Thou shalt schedule time for thyself and supportive network.
7. Thou shalt switch off and do nothing regularly.
8. Thou shalt be loving, satisfy and unattractive at times.
9. Thou shalt not even feel guilty.
10. Especially, thou shalt not be thine own worst enemy but be thy best friend.

If you laughed, then it's a guarantee that your immune globulin A level is up. You've just given your immune system a boost.

Healing energy

My live in a plane resplendently filled with flora and fauna. All the roots of trees are anchored deep in the center of the earth where the life force is

Inside Out
Cory Quirino

contained. Thus, all plant life is alive and imbued with living energy. But did you know plants have emotions?

Cleve Backster, an American polygraph expert, proved through his experiments that plants have feelings that they can connect with each other and other living beings. Through a polygraph test connected to the plants, scientists more observed when a person killed a plant in the same room where other plants were monitored. Because plants have the capacity to give and receive energy, they can be used to help cleanse a room and increase its good energy. If you have never recognized the healing abilities of plants, it's time to do so. You may do the following:

1. Hug a tree.
2. Talk to your plants.
3. Walk into a forest.
4. Visit a green park.
5. Plant a tree.

Skin saver

Nothing beats the power of Vitamin C-rich foods to heal skin. Stock up on fruits like orange, lemon, calamansi and guava. The higher the C content, the greater the healing benefits to your body. Consume an rough spots like elbows, feet, knees. Follow with a cool shower and spray of H2O mist. Available only at World of Wellness, 7 Malakas, UP Diliman; tel. 7215676, 3329864.

Enlarging breasts

Hypnosis is used medically to unlock and resolve hidden fears, anesthesia in patients, etc. Here's the case of a doctor-RC Mason published in the British Medical journal, telling about the amazing recovery of a boy with severe skin problems. Using the power of suggestion, the boy's skin condition improved dramatically. Therefore Barber, a psychologist, using the same principle, reported that a total of 72 women using hypnotic suggestion increased their breast sizes from 1 ½ inches to 13 weeks. The remarkable hypnotic words were: Breasts grow! your breasts are warm, rich coursing flame, or the sun or heat lamp shining. Feel that your breasts are getting warmer.

Affirm today: "The healer is inside me."

Love and light!

References: "From the Perplexed for the Professor" by Amina Alonto

How a woman conquered cancer without using drugs

By Wilson Ang
Correspondent

She credits her untiring energy to update herself on health improvement techniques with helping her make practical, informed choices

CYNTHIA LLANTADA recovered from breast cancer without using chemotherapy and radiation treatments in just 14 months. Nonetheless requires for her to recreate how she did it spurred her to write "Healthy by Choice," a book where she demonstrates the different alternative healing practices she underwent.

Llantada points out that it is important for readers to consult qualified professionals-medical doctors who practice both conventional and alternative medicine, as well as naturopathic doctors and nutritionists-for topics, among others.

Therefore, for all volunteers taking one's health into one's own hands. "My doctors didn't make my decisions for me," the proclaims. Llantada engaged doctors as consultants and study her own choices.

Finding out

In a scenario that will sound all too familiar to many readers, Llantada recounts how hardest for most of her meals, and self-esteem and sleep, pain, stress from work, deliberately reducing her water intake (to avoid having to go to the bathroom for long work mornings), overdependence on antibiotics and pain medications, stress from daily chores kept postponed and general lack of time invested in downtime or relaxing took a cumulative toll on her body.

In 2003, she found a golf ball-sized lump in her breast and subsequent tests revealed numerous cysts and cancer in her breasts, liver and uterus. She was told that cancer metastasis was a strong possibility and was eventually diagnosed to have stage three cancer-who only 40 percent of the stricken survive within five years.

With a strong conviction that "the body can heal itself," Llantada eschewed the usual chemotherapy and radiation treatments. She argues that most conventional treatments merely mitigate symptoms and not necessarily cure the cause of cancers.

Instead, herbal supplements, reflexology, acupuncture and hydrotherapy were her first few selections from an arsenal of non-conventional therapies that eventually included nutrition therapy, water purification and even the use of sunlight energy-enhanced products such as pendants and water to neutralize the "voltage" of her body's cells.

How to choose

Llantada had been a sickly child prone to colds, asthma attacks and bronchitis. Her father routinely asked her to think of what she might have done to trigger these respiratory illnesses. She made her answer of how she might avoid recurrences. This manifested in her "the skill of decision analysis" which led her to a career in finance, and became her method of dealing with her cancer diagnosis and in making "risk-related" risks in trying out natural therapies."

Llantada notes that while surgery and pharmaceutical drugs are "sometimes the best short-term answers for serious problems," she contends that it can be frustrating when treatments end up not just killing the disease but also the person. As such, she points out, "there is no one way to solve health problems" and that it is therefore very important to research and inquire "to learn from the successes and mistakes of others."

She credits her "untiring energy to update herself on health improvement techniques" in helping her make "practical informed choices" in dealing with her condition.

The first step, she quotes, is that "a good diagnosis is important before one can decide on solutions to a medical problem." She relied on Dr. Elvira Navarro to perform Bio Resonance Chromo Gnudrosopin (BRCG) Vi-Bio Immuno Assay tests on her to fully diagnose her cancer. The book explains the principle behind the test, but basically, the higher amount of HCG found in the blood or urine, the more active the cancer.

The test has been found to detect cancers many months before symptoms appear from cancers (29 months). Discussion on the abdomen (27 months), skin cancer (24 months), and breast cancer (13 months). Throughout her journey with cancer, Llantada would use the test to monitor the effectiveness of her chosen therapies.

She retained the services of Dr. Thomas Sidonio, a naturopathic doctor who specializes in whole body detoxification through methods such as diet modification, supplements and colon irrigation.

Clean, then strengthen

After cleaning her body, Llantada went on to strengthening her body with good food, quiet time for her mental, emotional and spiritual well-being, and other less known healing methods like breathing her skin and jumping on a trampoline to strengthen her lymphatic system.

She has done all of these in the book and provides the introduction and principles involved in a conversational and nonmedical tone as well as practical ways to incorporate these into one's life. She includes a bibliography that cites the sources of her research and suggestions for further reading.

As a word of caution, Llantada tells readers about the phenomena of "healing crisis" or the "Herxheimer Reaction"-where the body can become ill when one begins healing therapies since it is expelling accumulated toxins at a much faster rate than normal. She reminds readers of the necessity of this phenomena and not to get discouraged.

Llantada ends the book with tips for healthy daily living. Simple and doable tips include chewing food properly (digestion begins in the mouth), drinking unprocessed water (and even moderating the appearance of one's stool as a way to gauge if the body's internal organs are working up to par. She also gives a list of healthy available foods that are nutritionally packed and have influence-building properties that range from antibiotic to purgative.

Eight months after her diagnosis, Llantada felt her energy level return, although the tumor grew to the size of a pigeon egg. Today, her cancer has been the tumor benign and free spreading to other parts of her body. Surgery was finally scheduled to remove the remaining mass, ending her ordeal with cancer. She was back to work in three weeks and more than five years later, she continues to maintain her health through the therapies she used.

"Healthy by Choice" is available in bookstores.

Is it possible for one to die during astral travel?

Part 2

Inner Awareness
Lorenz T. Escanlar

ANOTHER FREQUENTLY asked question is this: "Is it possible for me to die while I'm out of my body?"

Of course, yes. It is possible for you to die while out of your body, just as it is possible for you to die while crossing the street.

The point is that, it is not your being out of your body that causes death, but only when the silver cord is severed or broken. The silver cord is an elastic band that attaches subtle bodies that concerns our astral body with our physical body like an umbilical cord. It is the silver cord that animates the physical body while the astral counterpart is out. It is also the silver cord that snaps back at if there is some danger that may happen to the physical body. The silver cord cannot be cut physically because it is made up of nonphysical substances. It is called "astral cord." The material it is often called "silver cord" is the fact that it is silvery as seen by clairvoyants.

Not everybody knows, even the silver cord when he or she is out of the body. I am one of those who don't. However, still it does not mean it is not there.

"Is it possible for one to be possessed by a spirit while out of the body?" Yes, it is possible but it rarely does happen when you go out of your body naturally and unintentionally. Possession can happen if you are in a place where there are evil or negative spirits around, or if you are in the state of mediocrity or semi-consciousness. That's why it is not safe to attempt to go out of your body in a haunted house or when you are negative.

However, most spontaneous astral projections are safe. You must remember that there is protection given to us while we are out of our bodies. There are the angelic creatures and also our spirit guides that are always ready to protect us. Things are not benign around beings who still help us if we get into trouble.

Nightmare death

"Is there a connection between hangover (or night-mare death) and astral projection?"

At first glance, there doesn't seem to be a connection between them. Hallucinations and nightmares are common symptoms of hangover. Some medical researchers have theorized that hangover is caused by "amor pancreatitis" due to eating too much rice or carbohydrates rich food before sleeping. Even the worst hangover, although there were indeed a good number of cases where a hangover was associated with acute pancreatitis, there were also cases where no pancreatitis was found and the victims had not eaten too much rice before sleeping.

Another curious fact is that only Filipinos, and to a lesser extent Indonesians, seem to suffer from hangover. Why not other rice-eating people? Why not the Chinese? Suffice from this dreaded killer? We don't have a definite answer to this question.

But I have a theory why hangover happens. And this is only a theory which is subject to further research or validations. I believe hangover happens when a person goes out of his body in his deep and stream or is lured into the lower astral planes, which some call the "ghost underworld." Here in this plane are negative, immoral the spirits that are always on the lookout for astral bodies that stray into their realm. They grab these astral bodies and won't let them go. So the person dies mumbling and struggling to get out.

People who sleep with somebody who died of hangover have reported that before the victim expires, he or she is heard moaning, crying, gasping, as if fighting something. If not rescued from sleep on time, the person dies. The lower astral plane may be likened to what Christians call "hell."

Sleep in general, astral purposes is perfectly natural and safe.

Note: The next Inner Mind Development seminar will be held Feb. 20-21, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., at the 3/F Prince Plaza 2 Condo, Legaspi St., Greenhills, Shaw Blvd. Call 4137243, telefax 4110883, e-mail innerawareness@yahoo.com.

Greater chances of cure for patients with breast cancer

ROCHE ANNOUNCED RECENTLY it is now long-term follow-up data from two large pivotal studies evaluating adjuvant trastuzumab in HER2-positive early stage breast cancer presented at the CTRC-AACR San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium (SABCS). Both studies, NSABP B31 conducted by the North Central Cancer Treatment Group (NCCTG) and BCIRG006 performed by the Breast Cancer International Research Group consistently showed that trastuzumab reduced the risk of the cancer returning by about one-third in women with HER2-positive early breast cancer compared to patients receiving chemotherapy alone. In both studies, at least 80 percent of women receiving one year of trastuzumab were alive five of the disease at five years follow-up.

"The course of this aggressive disease has been changed for the better; trastuzumab is offering women with HER2-positive breast cancer greater chances of cure," said William M. Burns, CEO of Roche's Pharmaceuticals Division. He continued by saying: "The long-term follow-up results from pivotal studies solidly confirm that one year of trastuzumab is the foundation of cure."

The study confirmed trastuzumab's favorable cardiac safety profile in the long-term follow-up. In addition, both studies seeking to answer questions the medical community has been contemplating regarding the best way of giving their patients trastuzumab. Combining NSABP B-31 is the only trial performed to study the impact of trastuzumab administration either concurrently with or after chemotherapy. While the study clearly showed the long-term benefit of one year of trastuzumab with it, that regimen, there was a trend for the concurrent regimen being more beneficial to patients.

BCIRG006 evaluated trastuzumab in combination with anthracycline-based chemotherapy versus an anthracycline-free regimen. The study showed both approaches extended survival without the cancer coming back as well as overall survival compared to chemotherapy alone.

Dr. Dennis Slamon, director of clinical/translational research at UCLA's Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, said, "It is very rewarding to see that trastuzumab provides survival benefits when given in combination with anthracycline free chemotherapy, which may offer a better cardiac safety profile compared to the combination with anthracycline-containing therapy."

About Roche

Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Roche is a leader in research-focused healthcare with combined strengths in pharmaceuticals and diagnostics. Roche is the world's largest biotech company with truly differentiated medicines in oncology, virology, inflammation, metabolism and CNS. Roche is also the world leader in in vitro diagnostics, tissue-based cancer diagnostics and a pioneer in diabetes management. Roche's personalized healthcare strategy aims at providing medicines and diagnostic tools that enable tangible improvements in the health, quality of life and survival of patients. In 2009, Roche had over 80,000 employees worldwide and invested almost 9 billion Swiss francs in R&D. For more information, visit www.roche.com.

Energy-saving aircon helps fight allergens, harmful bacteria

By Anne B. Jardines

SAVE UP TO 32.4 PERCENT of your energy consumption with the new Crystal 2-tonne air-conditioner series from Samsung Electronics Philippines Inc. Among the highest energy-savers in its league, the new series also features technologies that help improve sleep and maximize airborne infection-related H1N1 and SARS.

"The Samsung Crystal 2-tonne not only cares for the health of consumers but also saves energy," said Samsung head for Digital Air Solutions Bing Pardi.

Most air conditioners in the local market today are non-inverter types. This is an old technology, Pardi said, that consumes a huge amount of energy with its frequent temperature fluctuations each time the unit automatically switches on or off to maintain temperature.

With the 2-tonne unit, he said, the compressor speed changes, slowing down or speeding up, to maintain temperature. It does not completely shut down, unlike the old technology, and consistently shut the compressor down and switch it back on the way non-inverter types do, saving huge energy—and monthly electric bills. It works for means 35 percent faster and can even cool room air bearing up to 46 degrees Celsius.

SAMSUNG executives (from left) Gaggan Mauricio, CE sales director; Dj Kim, business advisor for Home Appliances; Bing Pardi, head, Digital Air Solutions; Brian Rodrigo, product manager, Digital Air Solutions

Micro plasma technology

The Crystal 2 inverter series also features an innovative first in the industry and Pardi, that generates active hydrogen atoms and oxygen ions in the room. Called the Micro Plasma Ion System Technology, it binds the generated active hydrogen atoms and oxygen ions with protons (HO) "in a surface of harmful particles such as viruses, bacteria, molds and allergens," decomposing them into harmless water.

This technology inactivates dust mites, molds that maintain and spread viruses and germs, odors that cause skin irritation and other harmful allergens, he said. Pardi, The Micro Plasma Ion System Technology was also awarded the seal of approval for removal of allergens by the Internal Allergy Foundation.

Samsung technology has also been integrated into their Digital Inverter for deep, deep by already using three deep stages and providing users with the proper temperature to enhance deep and even facilitate wake-up time with Good sleep II.

The Crystal series is designed with high-gloss panel and soft-touch button remote control. Recommended retail price range from P30,990.00 to P40,995, including free installation package.

DAE BONG Kim, business advisor, Samsung Home Appliances and Bing Pardi, head, Samsung Digital Air Solutions

YOGA couple

How exercise strengthens a relationship

By Mitch Felipe-Montoya
Contributor

THE MOST COMMON tension couples encounter or talk-up problems are lack of communication, incompatibility, insecurity and stressful lifestyle. But how can physical activity strengthen one's relationship or love life?

Attracting your partner

According to Richard and Barbara Scarr, authors of "Love, Sex and Marriage," women's desire to be fit to please their partners and desire to feel in control due to media dissatisfaction are the most common reasons they gain weight. Women who gain weight feel insecure when they experience expression of disgust and withdrawal from their husbands. Disappointment might lead to suspicion, lack of communication and eventually emotional swearing.

Exercise can play a big role in maintaining or improving your weight and sexual relationship with your partner. In made 2-3 times a week of strength training in your weekly routine to improve your metabolism. Less hormonal level, release can remove your hormonal ring skills.

Improved moods

Exercise improves one's energy behavior, reduces stress, increases their chance you to interact and, most of all, improves your moods that will look, promote of emotional eating.

When you get bored at home, avoid sedentary activities like watching television or eating snacks while reading latest books. Instead, do household chores or follow an exercise video at your choice while preparing a healthy meal.

ONE!!! and way

Stronger bonding

For almost eight years now, I've shared almost the same interests with my husband. We enjoy delicious food (middle) foods. Time spent together has really made our bonding stronger.

But you don't need to have the same interests with your partner. Sometimes, you just need to talk about anything, compromise (my when you run by both healthy and active.

Schedule enjoy a work out—of-time swimming or doing activities or walk together 3-5 days a week for 20 minutes in the morning or after dinner.

Stress management

Studies have shown that an active lifestyle will help lower one's stress level.

Simply exercise can relax your mind and body, meaning you give a good feeling during and after finishing the event, having can release negative feelings and lowering stressors as well.

Staying healthy will decrease your financial stressors by not spending much on hospitalizations and medications.

E-mail the author at mitchfelipe@gmail.com.

Can cancer, diabetes, heart diseases be healed?

By Arman Perez Tabunias
Contributor

THE CORONARY HEALTH Improvement Project (Chip), a powerful educational lifestyle intervention mechanism from the United States, will be launched in the Philippines at Club Filipino, Greenhills, San Juan City, on Feb. 20.

The program will show that diseases, "70 percent of which are attributed to lifestyle choices, are largely reversible through simple lifestyle changes."

As bad habits mean people in desperate need of help, they are supposed to change an entire lifetime of unhealthy choices in just 30 days. Here in the Philippines, the program will be presented in two-hour sessions that need four hours a week for four weeks.

Chip founder Ike Pestchanker and several of those out of four known killer diseases reversible—heart disease and stroke, cancer, type II diabetes, and high blood pressure. Through the program, daily exercise routines are enhanced if not entirely chosen, and unhealthy smoking habit is eliminated, thereby lowering blood cholesterol, triglycerides and blood sugar levels. Excess weight and high blood pressure are reduced. Ultimately, the results in incidence of negative personalities and medications, requirements, dialysis, amputations and hypertension—thus, lowered medical bills.

Another important target of Chip reduction concerns mental illness, a change. It is said that even if Chip participants are encouraged to eat more, high cholesterol level would still drop to more than 10 percent and once pounds come off in just 30 days by making safe, simple, painless and deliberate lifestyle choices.

The features of Chip that make it reach out tolerations, motivations, and supportive community time tried participation to make smarter choices. In the Chip program, each participant will receive attractive and easy to use materials targeting important health and lifestyle issues.

The Chip program was founded by Dr. Hans Diehl, director of Lifestyle Medicine Institute and clinical professor of Preventive Medicine in Loma Linda University Loma Linda, California.

Chip clinical results, based on "before" and "after" clinical and lifestyle evaluations, have been published in diverse medical journals which include the American Journal of Cardiology, Journal of American Dietetic Association, Journal of Preventive Medicine, and Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine.

"I went on seven pills and oxygen and [with] one year to live, now I'm off all my medications and pain free," said Chip graduate Irma Dalusol. "I've lost 95 lb., my doctor gushed. It took me 'off all meds and I'm now doing my gardening again. I'm on my toilet, and living the best life I've ever."

In Asia, the first Chip program is introduced in the Philippines by founder Ike Pestchanker, a diabetic for 33 years who co-founded the LLT Style Scripture Ministry with late friend Lee Fernandez, and Dr. Rhonda Verzosa, who maintains with her husband David Verzosa the Health with Ministries Inc., a non-stock and non-profit association that promotes health and nutrition education programs to churches, communities and schools.

The Chip programs will run Feb. 20-March 20.

For inquiries, call 09088[illegible], e-mail to chip@philippinechip.org.

Chlorine-proof swimwear for water exercises

FOR SPRING/SUMMER 2010, Speedo has created a range of stylish yet functional swimwear and apparel designed to support every member in and around water.

Perfect for those who love to swim regularly, take part in aqua fitness classes or enjoy pool-based activities, the Aquafitness range combines unique silhouettes with the latest in sports technology.

Featuring swimsuits and bikinis in chlorine resistant fabric, the collection offers women the ultimate in bust support, with inner bras, power mesh back panels and adjustable cups, comfortable sweeping to give the best mere definition and lift.

A variety of back designs and degrees of body coverage caters styles and fits to complement one's exercise regimen.

For men's water enthusiasts, the collection offers a selection of classic trunks and rashguards, great for those who enjoy regular laps swimming or pool-based fitness.

Many of the suits are made from the exclusive 100-percent chlorine-resistant Speedo Endurance+ fabric, ensuring that swimmers will keep their shape swim after swim, reducing the need for replacement.

A range of supplementary technology applies, such as caps, fastening aids and pool footwear are also available. The Speedo Aquabiker HPF Power enables one to listen to favorite tunes, while key warming up on the pool side or as part of an exercise regimen is the same.

Swimming is one of the best forms of exercise. Just 30 minutes of steady swimming burns 200 calories. The presence and resistance of the water makes the body work harder. Thirty minutes of activity in the water is worth 45 minutes of the same activity on land.

Speedo's concept shops are located in Alabang Town Center, Ayala Center Cebu, Bonifacio High Street, Cityna Davao, Robinsons Place Manila, Glorietta 4, Lim Ket Kai Mall, MacQuee Mall, Puerto de Oro, Rockwell, Robinsons Place Ermita, SM City Cebu, SM City Davao, SM Mall of Asia, SM Megamall, The Podium and Trinoma.

SPEEDO Aqua Series range combines unique silhouettes with the latest in sports technology

CHLORINE-RESISTANT fabrics ensure that swimsuits will keep their shape swim after swim

Practical health tips from hospital's weight clinic

SETTING PERSONAL FITNESS goals is a good way to keep your eyes on fitness.

Dr. Jojo Carlos-Robson of Makati Medical Center's Weight Management Center says that exercise, eating right and maintaining a positive mind are self-observed the key factors in health and wellness.

Being lazy should never be an excuse to ditch exercise. There are simple things that you can do to boost your metabolism and burn calories—at home.

In fact, studies show that just 15 minutes of moderate exercise can do you and your body a world of good.

If you don't have time to go to the gym, get yourself a trusted ball or a jumping rope. There are plenty of online learning exercise that you can do with these, and you can even watch a DVD in the comfort of your own living room.

Spice up your routine by changing by doing a different exercise each day. Mix it up with brisk walking, running, joining yoga sessions or even dance classes.

When in the office, do simple of desk exercises to keep you brain functioning. Do this, like something as simple as practicing perfect posture can help strengthen your abdominal muscles and prevent back aches. Also, try taking the stairs instead of the elevator or parking further away from your office so that you can walk the rest of the way.

Eating right to lose weight

Contrary to popular belief, the best way to lose weight is eating right, and not necessarily eating less.

Never discount the importance of breakfast; always make it a point to eat something at the start of each day, as it will give you that much-needed energy boost to kick-start your morning.

Never skimp on carbohydrates, either. But make sure that you are eating good carbs—those that aid in the burning of calories, which in turn translates to body fat. Examples of these are fruits and vegetables, whole grains and potatoes.

Contrary to harming your junk food habits, as most of these contain high levels of sugar, fat or salt. However, for those who find it hard to curb their desire for junk food, a good way to fight the temptation is to find healthier alternatives, such as fresh fruits or nuts.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Ernnie G. Velarde

Grammy winners here for PIJazzfest

By Pichole Concepcion

THE GRAMMY-WINNING GROUP FILLIPINO jackers, soul jazz band Brand New Heavies, US-based Filipina singer Glaiza Masa and the young London-based Filipina crooner Mirkha Adana lead the ceremonial contingent of performers at the 5th Philippine International Jazz and Arts Festival (PIJazzfest), which opened Friday and runs till Feb. 28 at various venues.

Some 200 musicians, including local artists Rom Dondon, Johnny Alegre, Ayo Tuason, Jake Shanley, Dimsdale, Beau Muskiet, Ali Shamsuing, AMP Big Band with Prof. Mel Villena, Guarana, Mike's Apartment, Jazz Valentines, Ryse Soluzes, Siti and a slew of acts from Jemi, Thailand, Indonesia, Mexico and the United States are participating in the 17-day fest which consists of bar tours, mall tours, workshops and main performances at Solaire Philippine Plaza.

The annual event, which debuted in 2005 and which has featured such acts as Vince Prairie, Diane Schuur, Lee Ritenour and Spyro Gyra, is said to operate on a right budget but is consistently successful in presenting world-class performances.

This year's headliners offer a variety of jazz-based music. The American band Yellowjackets, whose core members started out playing with an R&B edge, have been recording albums that always turn most-

GRAMMY FROM

It's Binoe for Toni

WEEK TODAY, GOMEZ AND I SAW EACH other at the party of my dear colleague Sassy Sabio, we both said in jest that we were the "older version" of TITO's "Daing" hosted by her sis Alex and my son JC.

I teased her, "Guys! You'll be working with my ex, Binoe! How will you handle it if he talks to you?" She retorted with a laugh, "Ayoko nemang isako pagpasa na at isipin ko ng bako. Ignore siya ako just because gusto ng parent natin all his feeling ladies. The sure there's more to Robin Padilla than 'ating a father man. When his stuff hasn't ran my on 'The Buzz' that ayaw ang pumi-do-maging isang leading man, they called to ask me if I want it. Parang sa lang kay Pinky Pascual o Gam Milby ang mawot when their actresses are asked who their dream leading man is. Sa pare-pare ko, I chose Binoe." Make way for something else and something more!

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

I bumped into Pelo Ravidas before 9-day and asked him who his valentine would be? "Ehe, pero yun!" he quipped. "Per hindi nalang ito a pero."

Is he willing to campaign for his ex Ana Mi-ao? "Surely. Okay naman kami sa ano," he said. "Siste maging okay din kami ng asbar-es ko, si Juan Gaeta. Wala namang problema sa akin. Iwan ko lay Juan. Sadmahan kami when we happen to see each other at parties."

ETA DA

Martin Nievera CD hangs on at No. 1

THE TOP-SELLING ALBUMS IN THE Philippines for the week Feb. 1-7 based on Odyssey Music & Video's outlets with sales reports:

OPM

1) "In Always," Martin Nievera, Polyfilm Records; 2) "Rare Na Nga," Willie Revillame, Star Records; 3) "Change," Jenicis Rosales, Star Records; 4) "Romance Revisited: The Love Songs of Jose Mari Chan," Christian Bautista, Universal Records; 5) "Decades," Pinky Pascual, Star Records; 6) "May Bukas Pa Sinisenyo Soundtrack," Various Artists, Star Records; 7) "Music & Me," Sarah Geronimo, Viva Records; 8) "Revelations Of The Soul," Nina, Warner Music; 9) "Franco," Franco, MCA Music; 10) "I Love Acoustic Too," Sabrina, MCA Music

Overall

1) "In Always," Martin Nievera, Polyfilm Records; 2) "Starless (Platinum Edition)," Taylor Swift, MCA Music; 3) "Rare Na Nga," Willie Revillame, Star Records; 4) "Change," Jenicis Rosales, Star Records; 5) "Romance Revisited: The Love Songs of Jose Mari Chan," Christian Bautista, Universal Records; 6) "Decades," Pinky Pascual, Star Records; 7) "Pre Music," 4 Minute, MCA Music; 8) "2010 Grammy Nominees," Various Artists, Polyfilm Records; 9) "May Bukas Pa Sinisenyo Soundtrack," Various Artists, Star Records; 10) "Par Fame Monster," Lady Gaga, MCA Music

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Residents of Tondo got so excited when the PLDT Bilis Kabit team came to town with the new PLDT Internet@Home. Those who have been wanting to get a new PLDT landline and internet rushed to the PLDT Bilis Kabit booth.

'Di pinansin ng mga tao ang init at traffic – especially when they tried PLDT Internet@Home on the spot and proved that phone calls are clear and the internet connection is really fast. Impressed talaga sila when they found out na pwede nila itong i-take home and instantly get connected within 24 hours.

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"Dati nakikinabang lang kami ng internet connection sa kapitbahay namin. Laking tuwa namin nang makitaan-tanong mo ang landline plus internet connection ng PLDT. Lahat kami sa bahay, sulit sa sulit ang gastos nito. Sacked nga rin yung husband kong nasa Palau late na nang maka-chat at makita niya kami ng anak ko sa webcam."

"Bukod sa dalaga pag nakakausap mo nang matagal ang mga kanya mo sa Dad ko, pasok pa sila kalagan. Lalo na 'pag nakaka-chat at nakikita mo sila sa computer. That's the closest I can get to being with them in person. Malaki na lang PLDT kasi makinis talaga ang bayarin."

"Nakita ko sa TV na merong landline plus internet sa wireless ang PLDT kaya kinuha kami ng daddy nang mabili namin ang PLDT booth dito sa lugar namin. Cool ang daddy ko, nabibili yan sa games. Kami ng kapatid ko ang gumagamit for research sa school."

"Napakaswerteng talaga nito at nag-try dito sa PLDT booth. Napaisip ako sa sarili nang internet. Ang bilis! Excited ako kasi pwede na palang mauwi at magamit within 24 hours. Mag-magagamit na ako sa pag-email at syempre pang-chat at Facebook."

"Nakausap ko sa newspaper ang tatay ko sa PLDT Internet@Home. Nung araw na kumuha ako, kinabit ko agad pag-uwi ko! Kagaya kahit gabing-gabi kami nagaaral mag-chat ng husband kong nasa abroad, okay lang. Pati mga anak ko kasama kami sa mga school assignments nila."

"My daughter and I are overwhelmed by the idea that we can have a landline and an internet connection in this hall. Kahirapan talaga noong panahon na sa bahay. Ang anak ko kasi sobra nasa bahay lang dahil nag-iisa siya. Ako naman gumili ng gamit ang landline para sa mabili kong buy and sell business."

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HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a lovely, fun period for you. You're willing to put the welfare of others before your own. Remember this.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): What's wonderful about Taurus is that you're always willing to learn. Whether it's a new skill or a different way of looking at life, you're open to it. Your curiosity makes you a fascinating person.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Your public reputation gets a much-deserved boost. Maybe those nights at the computer writing Geeky Squeeky — memes, comedy routines and OMs. Fabulous writing, that's what it is.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Avoid office, or a classroom, get-together after work. You'll fall in love with the first person you meet. Be sure to wear your wedding ring.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Other people have a different perspective than you do. Instead of thinking they're wrong, try to understand why they see things differently. You'll learn a lot.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Is this the week you finally do that thing you've been putting off? Yes, it is. Don't let fear stop you. Instead, let excitement and anticipation be your guides.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Your sense of humor is a big part of your charm. Remember, though, that not everyone is as witty as you are. Be sensitive to those who aren't.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Your creativity is at a high point right now. Don't be afraid to express yourself. Whether it's through art, music or writing, you have a lot to say.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You're a social butterfly, and you're in your element when you're surrounded by people. Don't be afraid to introduce yourself to someone you don't know.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Take a moment to appreciate how far you've come. Sometimes you're so busy looking forward that you forget to look back and see how much you've accomplished. You've come a long way, baby.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You're a wonderful friend, but sometimes you're so busy helping others that you forget to help yourself. Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): It's time to do planning and work. Is anybody you need, besides you, not good about getting stuff done? Others may have to be your scapegoat, as well. Enjoy your day!

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	5	3	7	4	2	6	8	9
7	8	6	5	9	3	2	1	4
3	9	2	8	1	6	5	4	7
2	1	9	4	6	8	7	3	5
8	6	4	3	5	7	9	2	1
5	3	7	2	8	9	1	6	4
6	4	8	9	3	1	4	5	2
9	7	1	6	2	5	8	4	3
4	2	5	1	7	4	3	9	6

Concepts Sudoku

	5	2	6			9	7	
3	1			4			6	8
			4		3			7
		3		7		4		
1			8		9			
7	8			5			9	6
	6	4			2	1	5	

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2 DEAR JOHN
3 VALENTINE'S DAY
4 THE WOLFMAN
5 PAANO NA KAYA

6 AVATAR (Digital 3D)
7 LOVE HAPPENS
8 BIRO
9 LEGION
10 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF

MANILA

1 THE WOLFMAN
2 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF
3 VALENTINE'S DAY
4 DEAR JOHN
5 PAANO NA KAYA
6 LOVE HAPPENS
7 LEGION

METRO EAST

1 DEAR JOHN
2 THE WOLFMAN
3 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF
4 VALENTINE'S DAY
5 LEGION
6 AMITAH
7 DIARE BY
8 THE PRINCESS & THE FROG

NOVALICHES

1 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF
2 VALENTINE'S DAY
3 DEAR JOHN
4 THE WOLFMAN

FORUM ROBINSONS

1 THE WOLFMAN
2 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF
3 VALENTINE'S DAY
4 DEAR JOHN

STA. ROSA

1 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF
2 VALENTINE'S DAY
3 THE WOLFMAN
4 PAANO NA KAYA

LIPA

1 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF
2 THE WOLFMAN
3 PRINCESS AND THE FROG
4 THE BLIND SIDE
5 PAANO NA KAYA

DASMARIÑAS

1 PAANO NA KAYA
2 VALENTINE'S DAY
3 THE WOLFMAN
4 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF

STARMELLS

1 VALENTINE'S DAY
2 PAANO NA KAYA
3 AVATAR
4 THE PRINCESS & THE FROG
5 THE WOLFMAN
6 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF

IMUS

1 VALENTINE'S DAY
2 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF
3 THE WOLFMAN
4 PAANO NA KAYA

ANGELES

1 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF
2 PAANO NA KAYA
3 VALENTINE'S DAY
4 THE WOLFMAN

TACLOBAN

1 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF
2 THE 5TH WEST DOOR
3 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL

DUMAGUETE

1 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF
2 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL
3 THE 5TH WEST DOOR

BACOLOD

1 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF
2 VALENTINE'S DAY
3 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF
4 THE IMAGINARIUM OF DR. PARNASSUS
5 PAANO NA KAYA
6 LEGION

ILOILO

1 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF
2 PAANO NA KAYA
3 VALENTINE'S DAY
4 THE WOLFMAN
5 SOLOMON KANE
6 LEGION

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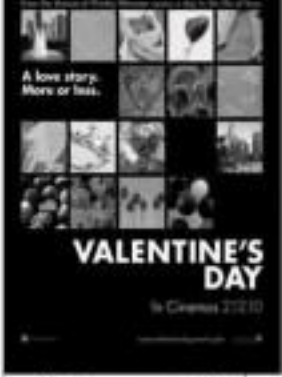

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Grammy winners here for PIJazzfest

From page D1

nations at the Grammys. In 1988 the band's "Politics" album won the Grammy for Best Jazz Fusion Performance.

The Entrids are Brandi Sowards, who sings, plays tambourine and hip hop rudiments; their popularity as an acid jazz band, are known for the hits "Dream On Dreamer," "Somewhere," and sprightly covers of "Midnight at the Oasis" and "You've Got a Friend."

Charmaine Clamor has gained stature in LA for her efforts in playing jazz with a Filipino twist, which she calls "jazzipino." She's the only Pinoy artist (along with Cyndi Laupar, Natalie Merchant, Jose Jansen, etc.) handpicked for an all-star CD band as David Byrne's remixed on Imelda Marcos.

Mishka Adams, daughter of Filipina sculptor Agnes Arellano, takes stem-cell Fems avant-lang and reading music in London to take part in PIJazzfest. Candid Records, where she's a contract artist, is sponsoring her homecoming gigs.

"I'm singing two new songs that I wrote while learning skills, like arranging," said Adams.

Her performances, which started last night, runs this today at 2 p.m. (in a workshop with pianist David Stuck at the PhilSpirit Harmad Universities); Feb. 18, 6 p.m. (with the Jazz Aficionados and Smoothie)" at L Fisher in Bonifacio); Feb. 21, 6 p.m. (with Clamor and various international artists at Ayala Museum); and Feb. 27, 6 p.m. (with Smoothie)" and the Grand New Disasters at Enlisted Philippines Plaza's Harbor (under dera).

The promoters are upbeat, despite jazz still having cons. Fitted to a niche audience. "Young people are more aware and appreciate what we do, as shown by the hits on our website," said Estrada Goldfarr, a former executive at San Miguel Corp. who, with guitarist Edgar Serrano, singer Sandra Reyes and her husband, drummer Jess Reyes, completes the core group that means PI Jazzfest. "There were generations of music fans are the ones asking, 'when is the next jazz fest?' which is unheard of five years ago."

Log on to pijazzfest.com for a complete list of performers, concert dates and venues.

SINGER-ART: Charmaine Clamor has gained stature in LA for her efforts in playing jazz with a Filipino twist, which she calls "jazzipino." She's the only Pinoy artist (along with Cyndi Lauper, Natalie Merchant, Jose Jansen, etc.) handpicked for an all-star CD band as David Byrne's remixed on Imelda Marcos.

It's Binoe for Toni

From page D1

Love is blind indeed, but in Bilo and Ami's case, it's proving blind as they pretend to be invisible to each other.

* * *

When Tim Bolgado was selected to choose a director for his TV5 show, he chose Al Quiros for a reason and his son Dolo Quiros for a reason, too, which now found its Hong Kong with a thriving business, will shuttle back and forth to be his dad's director.

He looks to helping conceptualize the King of Comedy's new show. It's bound to be the sitcom to end all sitcoms!

* * *

Becky Aguila finally gives details about her and former friend Angel Locsin.

Her not-revenge gone: "It was a mutual decision for Angel and me to part ways. Magkaaway man si kung at gitbanan for eight years. Marami kaming pagsubok sa pangalawan. May hangganan ang lahat. Nothing permanent but change. Ang importante naglaro nako Kami nang maayos. Hope po kami magkaibigan sumaya ka po

TONI Geminga

ang seventh summer steps and product endorsement renewal.

"I wish Manny Ethel Ramon and Gel goodluck to team-up talk. I know Angel is in good hands. As for the reasons we split up: Minor misunderstandings over leisure on of proportion, ni di magpapa- at sanaya. It has nothing to do with money or business. I just want to make that clear to my public."

Becky says that JoshUa Imler

Guess for

•A TV personality caught her screen husband in the act with an actress host who has close in past. It's not the first time Ali cheated on her mate. Reading around her become her favorite no!

•An actress may be suffering from severe disorder she's not aware of. As her colleague puts it, "I've want of a better or phenomena for her weird behavior, it's highly probable that she has the reverse kind of the disorder her relative has. The manifestations is opposite but same as "reaching respect." Item to be is good.

* * *

DZMM Radyo Serbisyo 630 and Radyo Singalila 2Kilo has launched "Bahay Kubo," (Sun. days, 10 a.m.) hosted by Jimmie Romero, who will help workers and professionals improve their work with job-related discussions and tips.

Meanwhile, the formidable tandem of Vic de Leon-Lirio and Cheryl Cosimi-al, so debuted in "Bida Radio" (mondays, 8 a.m.). They've become on the biggest news and issues in the country.

* * *

Catch the highly anticipated drama of Angelica Panganiban, Richard Yap and Jennylyn Mercado's battle it out for the ESA judges.

Not to be outdone also is "Smallville's" two-hour special episode "Absolute Justice" on Feb. 17 and 24 at 9 p.m. Step into the red carpet with Hollywood's biggest stars on the official Academy Awards" airing on March 8 at 7 p.m.

Before the 1990 People Power Revolution in 1983's "Lean gresso Libo" the sports-line, cum-film, World Cup updates on "The Road to Johannesburg" every Wednesday at 10:30 p.m. starting Feb 24.

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